

**Holocaust  
Education,  
Remembrance and  
Research**



# **Mr. Miles Lerman**

CHAIRMAN, UNITED STATES MEMORIAL HOLOCAUST COUNCIL  
UNITED STATES

## **Overview of the Importance of Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research**

### **Break-out Session: Overview of the Importance of Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research**

In the Hall of Remembrance of the Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Eternal Flame is surrounded by the prophetic inscription of the Holy Scriptures of Deuteronomy, chapter 4. It reads:

"Only guard yourself and guard your soul carefully, lest you forget the things your eyes saw, and lest these things depart your heart all the days of your life, and you shall make them known to your children, and to your children's children."

What a fitting quote to inspire remembrance.

Our session today is dedicated to Holocaust education, remembrance and research.

How remarkable and how wonderful it is that in the midst of discussions of financial assets, of what to do to bring some modicum of justice after the biggest theft in human history, that we decided to discuss future plans for Holocaust education.

It is a mark of great foresight to understand how important it is that this century not end with assets, not end with a business deal, but with consideration of the hearts and minds of future generations. I am very pleased that so many dignitaries, scholars and specialists from several countries have seen fit to address the need to shape the future through Holocaust education, and I look forward to the exciting presentation of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education.



# **Dr. Beate Kosmala**

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GERMANY

## **Holocaust Education - Research - Remembrance in Germany**

### **Break-out Session: Overview of the Importance of Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research**

“Those who run away from their past will be caught up by it. We Germans face up to the past for the sake of the future.” This conviction was expressed by German President Roman Herzog during the visit of Israel’s President Ezer Weizmann to Bonn in early 1996.

With the exception of Israel, probably no nation has placed a greater emphasis on Holocaust education than Germany in the last decades. Since the early 60s, the conference of ministers of education and culture in the German states has provided explicit guidelines for teaching about National Socialism and the Holocaust. All official schoolbooks published since the mid-1980s have dealt with the Holocaust. Libraries for teachers and for students contain extensive literature in the German language on National Socialism and the Holocaust. Many German schools include a visit to a concentration camp memorial, meetings with survivors and eyewitnesses, and the use of related resources in Holocaust education. Outside the school setting, the subjects of World War II, the Holocaust and Jewish issues are very often featured in print media, television and radio, as well as in the world of the arts.

So it seems the younger generation have received a comprehensive education about this terrible chapter of German history. Unfortunately, one sometimes hears German students - and even teachers - say, “I’ve heard enough already.” This reaction does not necessarily follow an intensive confrontation with the theme. Instead, it has to do

with, on one hand, weariness with the many media programs in these issues, and on the other hand it involves a defense-mechanism and resistance to these themes. Clearly, what are needed are not just more hours, more material and more media coverage, but new pedagogical-psychological concepts. It raises questions not about the quantity of information but rather the quality of educational developments in Holocaust education.

What are the unique conditions of Holocaust education in Germany, regarding the destruction of European Jewry? Youth are confronted with the fact that the map of terror bears German names; that Germans ordered and planned the murder of European Jewry, and were the majority of perpetrators. This raises issues - for Germans most of all - of guilt, collective guilt and responsibility. Even though the educational target is by now the third or fourth post-war generation, with fewer direct family ties to National Socialism, the Holocaust theme draws sometimes resistance, characterized by a diffuse guilt-complex. Youth often feel as if they have been held collectively responsible, on an international stage. To reach this generation, to prepare them for intensive confrontations with this chapter of history, concepts must be developed that take into account this feeling, and that tie in to the lifestyles and thought patterns of youth.

Another situation unique to Germany is that until 1989 there were two German nations, in which the Holocaust and National Socialism were handled quite differently. The official antifascist policy of East Germany was like a political religion, built on concepts of guilt and pardon. With National Socialism subsumed under Fascism and with the new economic system allowing a distancing from the past, questions about German guilt and complicity faded out of the picture. In the last history schoolbook of GDR, published in 1988, the problem was explained away as yet another imperialistic crime, while antifascist resistance became increasingly important in educational material.

Both parts of Germany now have to learn together how to handle the tragic inheritance of our history from 1933 to 1945.

In 1995, when youth in the former East German state of Brandenburg were asked their position in Jews and Israel, researchers noted "a remarkable lack of feeling and paucity of words regarding the persecution and murder of Jews." In fact, teachers are confronted more often with disinterest, declarations of irrelevance - such as "history doesn't interest me" - and ignorance among students than with aggressive prejudice or denial. And disinterest is certainly not only a problem in former East Germany or even in unified Germany. To combat

disinterest and indifference regarding recent history - and therefore regarding the suffering of millions - is the greatest challenge for Holocaust pedagogy.

In universities, on the research level, the confrontation with the murder of European Jewry had a slow start, both in West and East Germany. In its first phase, primarily in the 50's, research focused on the SS, who were made out to be the lone group responsible for Germany's massive crimes. This supposedly all-powerful character of the SS and security police helped explain the lack of resistance among the populace.

In the second phase of the research, as more urgent questions were raised in West Germany about the massive crimes of National Socialism - brought on by the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem and the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt am Main and other war-crimes trials - studies were begun on the persecution and murder of Jews; the concentration camp system; the SS and police; which influenced and determined the level of knowledge regarding the National Socialist politics of extermination for decades.

In comprehensive German-language collections and debates of that time, research focused on the events leading up to the Nazi seizure of power.

Not until the mid-80's did the Holocaust itself become a prime topic for German historians. The 70's and early 80's can be seen as a second phase of repression. Perpetrators and crime scenes, accomplices and those who profited from the crimes - and most importantly the victims themselves - remained anonymous. One symptom is that it took 20 years for Raul Hilberg's ground-breaking work of 1962 "The destruction of European Jews," to come out in German, and then only through a relatively unknown publisher. Only in 1990 was it republished by a prominent house.

True, since the 1980s the Holocaust has been increasingly a topic of public discussion in Germany - receiving a major push from the 1979 broadcast of the American TV series, "Holocaust" - but it was usually discussed as metaphor for genocide in general rather than as a concrete expression of genocide.

The German contribution of empirical research on the persecution and murder of the Jews in Europe was minuscule, compared to that of the United States and Israel.

Since the early 80's, researchers shifted from discussion of "Fascism and totalitarianism" to a discussion about the decisions leading to the so-called "Final Solution." This debate, too, concentrated not on the

murders themselves - it was assumed that one was already informed - but rather on the interpretation and result of genocide.

The mid 80's brought new initiatives related to concrete, empirical questions; this in turn drew the attention of the international research community. It is worth mentioning in that context the research project of Munich's Institute for Contemporary History ("Dimensions of Genocide," published in 1991), aimed at establishing the number of Jews who were murdered in all occupied countries and in Germany.

Since the mid-90's, younger German historians have made important contributions to Holocaust research, based on empirical data, investigating the actions of the German occupiers in specific locations in Middle and Eastern Europe. Such research makes it clear that the National Socialist politics of extermination was no secret, but rather a clear part of the conquest and occupation plan in Europe. It is not seen today as an isolated issue but as an essential part of the occupation policy in the East.

Clearly, the number of those who participated directly or indirectly in the National Socialist murders extends far beyond the circle of those who fired weapons or shut the gas chambers doors. This conclusion can be drawn from studies by Goetz Aly on the murder of Jews in the Warthegau in Western Poland ("Endlösung: The Displacement and Murder of European Jewry," 1995); by historian Christoph Dieckman on the mass murder of Jews of Lithuania; Christian Gerlach on the occupation politics and murder of the Jews of White Russia, and the works of Dieter Pohl and Thomas Sandkühler on the so-called "Final Solution" in Galicia (1996), all of which describe the circumstances, perpetrators and victims of the murders.

Clearly, the racist attitudes - anti-Semitism - had a decisive effect in preparing the individual to commit murder. Racism and anti-Semitism designated a hierarchy of human worthiness, of the right to live, and imposed a moral imperative toward extermination by brute force, in direct opposition to the Humanistic or Christian ideals.

Just as the goal of research should be a clearer perception of the experience of perpetrators and victims, so should it be a central goal for Holocaust education that those whose lives were devalued should not be nameless and undefined, not simply referred to as the "victims," but rather as individuals with their own history and identity.

At this point I want to mention still another project. I myself am involved in research at the Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism in Berlin, regarding the phenomenon of help and rescue for Jews in Germany in the face of the Holocaust. Such systematic research has not



yet been done. We will now try to determine how many rescuers there were in Germany, who they were, under what circumstances they lived, what religious and political orientations they had, in which situations they became rescuers, what their relationships were to the persecuted, and what motivated them. This raises questions about the possibilities for contact between Jews and non-Jews during the war and about the actual dangers to those helping Jews in Germany. It is known that in Berlin 1,400 Jews were able to survive. When one looks at individual cases, it's clear that most of them involved a long chain of rescuers. From that we can conclude that several thousand Berliners helped to rescue Jews from deportation. This is an important area of resistance history that still needs to be explored.

The goal of this project is to produce a social history of solidarity under dictatorship and a contribution toward an understanding of the mentality of Germans under National Socialism. It is clear from the start that this won't result in an "anti-Goldhagen" image of the German people as a nation of rescuers and helpers. Even if a few thousand found the courage to help, how much more meaningful it is then to point out the millions who looked away, who stood by, or who helped carry out delusional racist policies. The meritorious behavior of a minority does not outweigh the culpability of the majority.

Nevertheless, this research may have its own value to Holocaust education. It shows that, despite dictatorship, there was a way for people to help, to confront the reality of persecution and fear of death for Jews, to retain their own humanity. Such people stand out from the sea of indifference. Through discussion of such examples, German students today may be confronted with their own indifference, and forced to come to terms with it. In the beginnings of 1996, German President Roman Herzog declared the 27th of January - the anniversary of the arrival of Soviet troops in Auschwitz - as a national day of remembrance for the victims of National Socialism. Though the day is marked by public discussion on the Shoah, on racism and anti-Semitism, the average German calendar still does not note this day. The future importance of this day will depend on how involved students and young people can become in the discussions and debates taking place. Their involvement would break through the usual, state-sponsored mechanical rituals of remembrance, creating a direct connection to the younger generation's spheres of experience. But an appropriate education must come first.



# **Mrs. T.J. Blankert-van Veen**

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## **Break-out Session: Overview of the Importance of Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research**

First of all I will thank the organizers of this special so-called break-out session in this unique Museum to give me, on behalf of the Dutch government, the opportunity to tell something not only about our efforts to support Dutch victims of the Second World War, but how to keep the memory alive of one of the darkest periods in human history and to inform young people.

Of my present compatriots one in three lived through the Second World War. Roughly speaking, everyone born before 1942 has conscious memories of that period. Even those who are too young to remember the war have been deeply affected by it. Of course the country suffered as a whole during the occupation but certain groups were singled out for a particularly tragic fate. Most prominent among them were the Dutch Jews, but also gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, political prisoners and those returning from Japanese internment in the Dutch East Indies. The Dutch people who had not spent the war in Polish, German or Japanese camps were unable to conceive of what their compatriots had been through in captivity. And I am sorry to say that it took some years for Dutch society to realize this.

Notwithstanding this lack of understanding the Netherlands has always seen it as its duty and responsibility to give material and non-material support to the victims of the Second World War. Over the years a unique system of legislation has been created to meet the needs of different categories of Dutch war victims: those who were prosecuted; those who were active in resistance groups and civilian victims of war.

The most important act came into force in 1973: the "Victims of Persecution 1940-1945 Benefits Act". The act is primarily aimed at groups whom the Nazis threatened with annihilations but also at victims of the Japanese occupation. In terms of its scope the act is unique. It still provides benefits and facilities for about 30,000 people. Most of them

live in the Netherlands, but the rest are scattered across the globe, in countries such as Israel, Canada, Australia or here in the United States, where approximately still 1,400 people are eligible for benefits under this scheme. In addition to providing material assistance, the Dutch government funds a number of organizations that specialize in non-material assistance for war victims, for example psycho-social help.

But as all of us here today are aware, we seem not to have learnt our lesson from the Second World War. People still oppress others and people are still forced to flee their homes or live in hiding, terrified that they will be killed or beaten or locked up because of their race, religion or their beliefs. Knowing what happened during the Second World War and understanding the background of what made such a chain of events possible, enables one to follow present developments critically, to reflect on one's own behavior and if necessary to change it. For the main thing for all of us, young and old, is to remain alert. That is why the Dutch government encourages and supports projects that inform young people about the Second World War. We fund information campaigns and have made them standard policy. Over the years a variety of activities have been organized to tell young people about the events that took place during the war and the lessons that can be drawn from them.

Memorial centers and museums have been set up at various sites in the Netherlands which have a special significance relating to the Second World War. They provide information on the Second World War in general, and on the events that took place especially on that site, providing a direct link for present-day visitors to the history of the Second World War. The centers receive government funding to maintain their facilities for the public at large. They may use this grants for maintenance, conservation and so forth, but a substantial share must be spent on educational activities focusing on the Second World War and the events leading up to it in relation to contemporary human rights violations and instances of discrimination. I shall briefly mention a few of the many activities organized by museums and schools.

-One project has been set up whereby people tell school children about their wartime experiences. The guest lecturer's account is then used as a starting point for a discussion on discrimination, racism and intolerance.

-Another project centers on monuments. Classes at about 1,000 schools have "adopted" over 650 war and resistance monuments. The aim is to tell the children about the event that "their" monument commemorates, and to make them understand its relevance today.

-Yet another project encourages schools to arrange museum outings for their pupils. Since the project started, an average of 10,000 pupils visit a war or resistance museum each year.

And of course we have our yearly Day of Remembrance on the fourth of May. And I am happy to say that young people take part in the commemoration programs that day, all over the country. Many of them feel such a special day of remembrance makes people think about current events, racism today, and developments in other parts of the world, and therefore highlights the importance of the Dutch Constitution and a democratic political system.

War museums in the Netherlands work hand in hand with similar organizations abroad. The government encourages these partnerships not simply because they are intrinsically valuable, but also to extend the scope of Dutch policy on information campaigns. Because the Netherlands -like many other countries- is becoming increasingly multicultural, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has recently chosen to broaden its approach to youth education on the Second World War to include present day forms of discrimination. This principle and practice are probably also familiar to other countries. We are particular interested in the way authorities and organizations in your countries have developed your information campaigns, the methods you use, the targets you have set and the results you have managed to achieve. Recent study in France, Germany, Belgium and Denmark has taught us the value of changing ideas on this subject.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let us never forget the victims. A time may come when they will be a part of world history, but we must never allow them simply to be consigned to the past. We are morally obliged to keep their memory alive and to keep reflecting upon the moral questions raised by the Holocaust and upon our responsibilities as citizens of democratic nations. The session of today will provide us a unique forum in which we can exchange ideas as to what should happen to achieve these goals. Hopefully it's start of working together as countries to keep the memory alive and to educate our youngsters.



# **Dr. Adolphe Steg**

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## **Remembrance and Education**

### **Break-out Session: Overview of the Importance of Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research**

I would like to describe how France is assuming the double responsibility of memory and of transmission. Today, in France, teaching about the Holocaust is largely organized and overseen by the government. This has not always been the case, however. Initially, the decimated, ravaged, and exsanguine Jewish community itself was able to put memory to use. In April 1943 in Grenoble, occupied at the time by Italian troops, Isaac Scheerson and some friends established the Center for Contemporary Jewish Documentation (CDJC) in order to collect the documents of persecution.

At the Liberation, Leon Poliakov and George Wellers, the directors of the CDJC at the time, established substantial archives, particularly those of the SS and of the Gestapo in France. In 1946, the CDJC published *The Jewish World*, the first journal in the world entirely devoted to the Shoah.

The Center's documentation was a major source for Leon Poliakov *Breviary of Hatred* which was translated worldwide, as well as for Joseph Billig's monumental work on the *Central Commissariat for Jewish Questions*.

In 1958, the Memorial to the Unknown Jewish Martyr (MMIJ) was unveiled, the first and long, the only building in the world which included in a single setting a memorial, an archival center, a library and a permanent exhibit. From 1956 on, the Memorial and the CDJC were the principal sources for research and teaching about the Holocaust.

The CDJC is not the sole commemorative site. Nearly 76,000 Jews were deported in France and only 2500 returned. At the war's end, the survivors were determined to set the memory of those who had been massacred in stone. The numbers of plaques, steles, and monuments erected to the memory of survivors on buildings, schools and children's homes from which Jews had been wrenched, as well as on the internment camps where they had been grouped before being deported, are too numerous to be individually cited here.

In 1978, Serge Klarsfeld published *his Memorial of the Deportation*, a major work on the Shoah. This work not only carefully inventories the names of deportees, but also serves as a tomb for all those who have disappeared, often without a trace. As early as 1954, a "National Day of Deportation" to the memory of political, resistance, and racial deportees was established. But it was only in 1990, that an essential step was taken: The French Government acknowledged the genocide and Vichy's responsibility for the persecution of Jews in France. A National Day of Commemoration of racist and anti-Semitic persecutions was decreed on February 3, 1993, and set for the anniversary of the Winter Velodrome round-up, on the Sunday following July 16. On this day, an official ceremony was organized in Paris as well as in cities all over France that were also requested to set commemorative plates to the racial and anti-Semitic persecutions of 1940 and 1944. The State thus initiated a deliberate policy of placing commemorative plates and erecting monuments.

Here we might mention the sites of the principal monuments.

- The camp at Drancy, just outside of Paris.
- The Winter Velodrome, inaugurated by President Francois Mitterrand and Prime Minister Edouard Balladur.
- The more recent monument at Izieu, in the Ain Department, where 44 children, their school director, and their teachers were rounded up by Klaus Barbie's Gestapo.

Last, the historic speech made by President Jacques Chirac on July 16 is a major part of this process. He emphasized his concern to see France make its contribution to memory and to history and to accept responsibility for the Vichy Government's role in carrying out the anti-Jewish measures adopted during the German Occupation. Finally, with respect to those Jews who did not return, the President declared, "We have an imprescriptible debt. To acknowledge past errors, and the errors committed by the Government, to hide nothing of the somber hours of



our history is quite simply to defend the idea of humanity, of human liberty and of human dignity.”

As we can see, the Government’s creation of these memorials throughout France and these moments punctuating the calendar year mark the memory of the Holocaust.

The transmission of memory, however, is first and foremost based on teaching in the schools. For the last 20 years or so, teaching about the genocide of the Jews and of the role and responsibility of the Vichy Government for the persecution of the Jews are part of the mandatory national school program. These subjects are taught at two different points in the national curriculum: First, in the 9th grade, when students are 14-15 years old and then in the senior year of high school, when students are 16-19 years old. In this way, every young French person knows something about the Holocaust, from an historical point of view. While we can, therefore, say that in France, we have the means to reach the Holocaust, we have not yet resolved the very difficult question of “how” to teach it, and more specifically, how to teach it to children. How can we describe an altogether singular phenomenon that is at once inexpressible, incomprehensible, and unthinkable?

First, this is a phenomenon for which there are no words. Manes Sperber illustrates this in his paraphrase of a traditional text in the liturgy of Whitsun:

“Even if the firmament were made of parchment,  
 And all the trees were pens,  
 All of the seas filled with ink,  
     And every dweller on the earth a scribe  
     Writing day in and day out,  
     Never could the Holocaust be described,  
     This Jewish tragedy of our era and of times to come.”

Shouldn’t this eloquent text be set in exegesis to every work that deals with genocide?

Second, the Holocaust is, by its nature, inconceivable. What can we tell children, when what was done goes beyond human understanding and cannot be grasped by the imagination? What can we tell them without making their blood run cold? These questions take on an even more painful acuity when we are talking to Jewish children. Children, to whom, for more than 3000 years on the eve of Passover, we have recounted the story of the Jews’ suffering under Pharaoh and the miraculous flight from Egypt. But what shall we tell them when no

miracle has occurred? The Red Sea. The red sea of Jewish blood did not open up to save the Jews and its waves did not come down to drown Jewish persecutors.

Third, teaching the Holocaust is incomprehensible. Every teacher is faced with a question that is asked over and over again: Why? Why the Jews? Why the Germans? Why God? Yes, why did God let this happen?

We do not emphasize these difficulties in order to diminish the importance of teaching the Holocaust, but rather because these particularities make this a subject unlike any other, which, in order to be taught, requires a specific pedagogy. Indeed, as teachers gain experience in teaching the Holocaust, their pedagogy will evolve.

I would like to offer some recommendations made by our teachers, based on their own experience. First of all, they consider that this teaching should not in preference be based on images. Children are stuffed with images on a daily basis; on television, they constantly see images of murders, blood, and bodies. The issue is not to speak to their eyes but to their hearts and to their minds.

Paradoxically, Claude Lanzmann's monumental and definitive work, *Shoah*, is often used in this context because this film shows neither blood nor cries, nor tears nor bodies. It shows only witnesses and through their testimony, we see what no image can show.

Isn't it enough, on occasion, to simply read a page of Serge *Memorial*. Take, for example, the Holz family, page 590. The parents were deported. Their children were sheltered in a children's home, but two years later were arrested and deported. Listen:

Holz, David, 13 years old  
Holz, Joseph, 12 years old  
Holz, Jacques, 10 years old  
Holz, Myriam, 8 years old  
Holz, Paul, 6 years old  
Holz, Emmanuel, Barely 4 years old.

When were they deported? On July 31, 1944.

The Allies were about to enter Paris. The German Army used every means possible to resist their advance and despite this, even though there were not enough trains to carry German troops to the Western Front, the Germans did not hesitate to send one train eastwards, to Auschwitz.

Isn't this example the best illustration for the children of this unbelievable phenomenon; for the Germans, the destruction of the Jews took priority over everything else, even over victory. Doesn't this example lead to a consideration of the hundreds and hundreds, the thousands of children murdered by these beings bearing human faces without flagging or being revolted by their acts? Doesn't this example lead, at least for the oldest high school students, to thinking about these children, the young Holz children and their cohort of poor little Jewish children, denuded, terrorized, walking quickly towards the sites of their murder? And yet, they had children's eyes and cried children's tears.

Next recommendation this teaching should not be taking place solely in history classes. It should cut across disciplines and be referred to in literature classes, in geography classes, in classes on civic education, and on philosophy so that this expression of Andre Neher; in particular, might be dwelled upon: "The millenary adventure of the human spirit underwent a complete failure at Auschwitz."

Last, and this is the final particularity of this teaching, the goal is not simply to acquire a knowledge but to bear a moral message based on values, on the absolute value of human life and on the absolute value of human dignity. For, and with this we shall conclude, in the words of Jean-Louis Forges:

"After Auschwitz, it is not enough to teach about Auschwitz, we must teach against Auschwitz."



# **Rev. Dr. Remi E. Hoeckman, O.P.**

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THE HOLY SEE

## **Break-out Session: Overview of the Importance of Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research**

The Holy See published on 16 March of this year a document entitled *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*. This document is addressed to Catholics throughout the world, especially in countries far removed, by geography and history, from the scene where the Shoah took place. It invites everybody else to join them in remembering this horrendous crime perpetuated by the Nazis against the Jews in Europe.

On the occasion of its publication, His Holiness Pope John Paul II expressed his fervent hope that this document would enable memory to play its necessary part in the process of shaping a future in which such a tragedy will never again be possible.

On several occasions prior to the publication of this document, Pope John Paul II was already very strong and clear on this point, but especially on the occasion of a concert in commemoration of the Shoah which took place in the Vatican on 7 April 1994. “We remember”, His Holiness affirmed, “but it is not enough that we remember”, “we have a

Part of this commitment is the Catholic Church’s engagement in a process of consciousness-raising and reflection on the Shoah, in opposing attempts to deny the reality of the Shoah or to trivialize its significance for the Jews, and in combating anti-Semitism. Hence the publication by the Holy See of the document *We Remember*.

The Catholic Church wishes to remember, but it wishes to remember with a purpose. The purpose of this document, therefore, is primarily educational in that it helps people to reflect on the past in order to draw from it the appropriate lessons for the present and for the future. “For”, as His Holiness has put it, “in our own day, regrettably, there are many new manifestations of the anti-Semitism, xenophobia and racial hatred which were the seeds of those unspeakable crimes. Humanity can not permit all that to happen again” (7 April 1994).

With regard to “Holocaust Education” specifically, the Holy See would like to point out that a great deal of work is being done in Catholic

education through the publication and distribution of relevant texts including the official documents of the Church [e.g. the Second Vatican Council's Declaration *Nostra Aetate*; the Guidelines and Notes published by the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews; the teaching of Pope John Paul II on the Shoah and anti-Semitism; statements made by the national Catholic hierarchies of many of the nations most deeply affected by the events of the Shoah], the revision of textbooks [cf. the content analysis studies of Catholic textbooks and manuals by Dr. Rose Thering O.P. (1960), Dr. Eugene J. Fisher (1976), Dr Philip A. Cunningham (1992), and update reports]; pertinent educational programs and the circulation of appropriate educational materials [for instance Notre Dame College in Manchester (New Hampshire) offers several undergraduate courses on the Shoah; resource materials such as "Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behaviour", developed by Margot Stern Storm and William S. Parsons, are used in the Catholic school system in the USA; the Sister Rose Thering Foundation at Seton Hall University each semester mails out 3,500 brochures on Holocaust Education to Catholic high schools and grade school principals; also the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion and their SIDIC Centers are doing a great deal of work in this field], and many other events, efforts and initiatives.

Most Catholic high school textbook series in this country include units on the Shoah. On a higher level, just to speak of institutions, there are many examples: The Institute for Jewish-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University (New Jersey) has been offering courses on the Shoah for decades; The National Catholic Center for Holocaust Education at Seton Hill College (Pennsylvania) was started over a decade ago; The Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield (Connecticut); The joint Archdiocese of Washington–Anti-Defamation League–US Holocaust Memorial Museum project develops curricula for Holocaust Education in Catholic schools and religious education programs. Moreover, in many places Catholic communities join Jewish communities to remember the Shoah on Yom Hashoah each year, or organize special services or study sessions on this occasion. In this country, for instance, the Catholic Bishops' Conference in 1988 urged all parishes to include prayer for the victims of the Holocaust on the Sunday closest to Yom Hashoah.

Also in other countries serious efforts are being made in this regard, for example in Canada, Australia, Italy, Germany, Poland, France, the United Kingdom. In Italy, for instance, the SIDIC Center in Rome develops educational programs; initiatives taken by bodies such as

FIDAE (organization of Catholic teachers) touch schools in various parts of the country. In Poland, relevant materials are being translated into the Polish language and distributed. The Catholic “Center for Information, Meeting, Dialogue, Education and Prayer” in Auschwitz/Oswiecim assumes an important role in Holocaust Education, also internationally. In Germany, the Catholic Church has created a wide-spread network of adult education in which Christian-Jewish programs occupy a prominent place.

Nonetheless the efforts need to continue and the necessary “reception process”, especially on the “grass roots” level, needs to be furthered, for an in-depth reflection on the Shoah reveals its fundamental cause, namely the fact that when society is stripped of respect for God it is also stripped of respect for man.





# **Prof. Yehuda Bauer**

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## **On Holocaust Education**

### **Break-out Session: Overview of the Importance of Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research**

The basic question we face when we deal with Holocaust education is - why deal with this particular Genocide rather than with any other of a host of similar events in this or the previous centuries? The answer of course is not that one should not deal with the other Genocides - on the contrary, anyone dealing with the Holocaust must compare, and must deal with the other tragedies as much as possible. But the basic response to the challenge must be to understand that the Holocaust has increasingly become, for the democratic world at least, a symbol of all the other Genocides, for racism, anti-Semitism, hatred of foreigners, ethnic cleansing, and mass destruction of humans by humans generally. The reason for this is, possibly, that a vague realization is taking hold of people that the Holocaust, the planned total annihilation of the Jewish people at the hands of the Nazi regime, is both a Genocide like other Genocides, and also an unprecedented event in human history, which should serve as a warning to all of us.

The unprecedentedness of the Holocaust consists in the fact that there are elements in it that are not found in other Genocides, whereas there are no elements in all the other Genocides that cannot be found in parallel events of this sort. For the sake of our argument, we are using the definition of Genocide as it appears in the UN Convention of 1948, although that definition may be subject to legitimate criticism. The elements that are not unprecedented in the Holocaust are first and foremost the suffering and pain endured by its victims. There can be no gradation of suffering as between Jews, Roma ("Gypsies"), Russians, Poles, or others who suffered under the Nazi regime. Individual suffering

is equal as between victims of torture, humiliation, deprivation, and death. But there are elements in the Holocaust that do not appear in the other cases, such as Rwanda, or the Genocide of the Armenians, or the auto-Genocide in Kampuchea, or with Native Americans, or others. First, there is the totality of the planned murder: every single individual defined by the Nazis as Jewish was to be murdered. Second, the globality: ultimately, every such individual all over the world was to be found, registered, dispossessed, humiliated, marked, arrested, concentrated, transported and killed. Third, whereas all other Genocides were committed with some kind of ideological rationalization and excuse, they all had a pragmatic basis of sorts. Ethnic groups were murdered because they were thought to be in the way of political programs, or military plans, or economic and social ideologies aimed at reorganizing society. With the Holocaust, the ideology was based on pure fantasy: an imagined world Jewish conspiracy to control the globe; the idea of Jewish “blood” contaminating and corrupting cultures, ritual murder accusations, and the like. One only needs to think of the fact that the German authorities in February 1943 took trained Jewish armament workers from their factories in the Berlin area, put them on trains and shipped them to Auschwitz to be killed - after the German defeat at Stalingrad, when they needed every pair of trained hands to produce arms. Fourth, the fact that the Jews were a very special group of people in Europe, the only non-Christian group at the time, who occupied a unique position in relation to Christianity. Christian civilization depended on their Scriptures on the one hand, and rejected them because of their refusal to accept the Christian Messiah on the other hand. Nineteen hundred years after the appearance of the Christian Savior, His people were murdered in Central Europe by baptized heathens. This creates a major problem for what is known as Christendom, even when most Christians never go to church; it parallels the unsolved problem for Jews, who consider their relation to the Deity to be a special one, and who have to ask why this tragedy was visited upon them, and what is its meaning, if any.

Yet on the other hand, as I said before, the Holocaust is a Genocide similar to others, and therefore can and must be dealt with in both its aspects: it’s Jewish specificity - it happened to a specific people, for specific reasons, at a specific time; and in its universality - it symbolizes the mass evils we are all capable of. It can serve as a warning, so it should not become a precedent. Ultimately, the Holocaust challenges us to work towards a world in which these evils are dammed in, and perhaps, hopefully, possibly, prevented altogether. Anyone who

wishes to project a pessimistic prognosis for the future will have an easy time of it; we have not learned much from the Holocaust, or any other similar tragedies; we have not established an international community that is capable of dealing with it, and so on. But there is an imperative for all of us: we must try and change that situation. Today, at least, governments and groups of governments are ashamed of what humans do, and one can see stirrings of international conscience. That is where we come in: we must engage in the most basic activity directed towards such a change: education, on all levels.

That in deed is what the Task Force for Remembrance, Education and Research is all about. It was established at the initiative of the Swedish government, in order to spread efforts at Holocaust Education worldwide. The governments of the United States and the United Kingdom responded, and then those of Germany and Israel. At this conference, the governments of Poland, the Netherlands and France also joined. The purpose of the Task Force is to design practical ways to teach young and old, to spread the knowledge that the example of the Holocaust shows the danger we all face because we are all of us capable of extreme evil; but we are also capable of preventing it, and behave in a way that is the exact opposite of what happened then. It is indeed absolutely essential that we emphasize the behavior of those few - pitifully few, to be sure, but yet there were many thousands of them - who saved and rescued at the risk of their own lives. They show that we can be different, and that it is a matter of environment, and most importantly, education, how we will act. For the first time in the history of mankind politicians, governments, got together to advance a specific educational project. We are all determined to do all we can to have this project continue as a permanent fixture: to provide a political umbrella to international educational efforts based on true cooperation. One should give full credit to the Swedish initiators of this project, who themselves are engaging in a massive educational effort in their own country, and provide a model that might well be imitated by others.

A historian is someone who not only analyzes history, which of course is his/her primary task, but also tells stories. So let me conclude by telling a true story. His name is Yankele Skorochod, and he is a carpenter in Tel-Aviv. He was born in a place called Novogrudok in what today is Belarus, and became a carpenter's apprentice. He then moved to a ghetto in a town called Baranovichi, and joined a group that planned an armed uprising. The uprising failed, it never took place. Yankele fled to a Belorussian graveyard in the town, where he was saved by a local gravedigger, who also showed him the way to the forest (that person is

one of the about 16,000 people recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous Among the Nations). He followed the advice of his rescuer and wandered through the Belorussian forests in search of Soviet partisans. Luckily, he found a group that had been sent from Soviet-held territory through the lines, of some one hundred men. He made friends there with a Belorussian youth of his own age, whom he remembers as Ivan. The two friends were sent out, together with three others, to recover a machine-gun far in the enemy rear. They were told not to take food from the peasants, for fear the peasants would turn against the partisans. The young men-boys became very, very hungry. Ivan saw a tree with some fruit - they did not know what that fruit was. The others told him not to eat it, but Ivan was so famished that he disregarded the advice, climbed the tree, and ate the fruit. A few hours afterwards he came down with dysentery. Yankele, his best friend, took care of him. They hid in a barn in a small village, and tried to cure Ivan. They failed, and Ivan died in Yankele's arms, saying that Yankele had taken care of him more lovingly than Ivan's own mother had.

They had to bury Ivan. Yankele went into the village, and at gun-point he forced two candles and an old Russian Orthodox Bible (in Old Slavonic - Yankele could make out the letters) out from the reluctant peasants. Yankele, the carpenter, then fashioned a crude casket, and put an Orthodox type of cross on it. They put the body in, and lowered it into the ground. Then Yankele, the Jewish carpenter, lit the candles and read out from the Bible what he thought an Orthodox priest would have read. Then, silently, they started in their way back to their unit. They never found the machine-gun.

You must understand - Yankele was telling this story at Hebrew University, to my seminar. He is a heavy-set man, with large hands. He told his story haltingly, and we sat around in complete and stunned silence. When he finished, there was an oppressive silence in the room, and he was resting on his elbows staring at the table in front of him. Someone had to break the silence, and I was the teacher. So I asked him the most stupid question I could possibly have asked: Yankele, I said, why did you do it?

He stared at me, uncomprehendingly, and after a while he stammered: but...but...he would have done the same for me, had it been the other way round.

Ever since then, I have always considered myself a pupil of Yankele Skorochod. So, I think, should all of us who are venturing on this path of Holocaust education.

# **Stuart E. Eizenstat**

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ECONOMIC, BUSINESS AND  
AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES

## **Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research**

Break-out Session: Goals of the Task Force for International  
Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research

At the initiative of Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson, the Swedish, UK and U.S. governments, together with experts from our countries, gathered in Stockholm last May to launch an unprecedented initiative – The Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. Our countries and many others – Germany among the first and most consistent – have engaged in Holocaust education efforts at home for many years. But this is the first time that heads of government have agreed to cooperate directly with others countries, through diplomatic and other channels, to strengthen Holocaust education efforts on both sides of the Atlantic and beyond.

As Prime Minister Persson said so eloquently in May, and as did our speakers on the first panel here at the Museum this morning, Holocaust education and remembrance can help ensure that the crimes of the Holocaust are never forgotten nor repeated. As this century comes to a close and we enter the new millennium, our international cooperation can encourage and reinforce work in many nations to strengthen Holocaust education efforts, to create new ones and to finally begin such efforts where they have been overlooked.

Sweden served commendably as Task Force Chairman from May until September 25, when the U.S. assumed the Task Force Chairmanship, which will pass to the UK in January 1999. On

September 25, Israel and Germany became members of the Task Force, and have already made valuable contributions.

On behalf of the Task Force, I would like to give special recognition to the Prime Minister of Sweden and his representatives on the Task Force, State Secretary Pär Nuder and Foreign Ministry Political Director Ulf Hjertsonsson. I would also like to thank my Task Force colleagues from Germany, Israel, and the UK for the hard work they have put into this initiative these past months. Finally, I would also like to commend Professor Yehuda Bauer of Yad Vashem, one of the great Holocaust scholars and educators in the world, for his intellectual guidance as Personal Advisor to the Task Force.

During the U.S. tenure as Task Force Chairman, we have focused the initiative on a number of priority areas initially agreed in May. These projects, some of which are work in progress to be completed in the first half of next year, are highlighted in the Task Force report that I present to you today. Our hope is to give maximum exposure to this unique and innovative work before the many distinguished participants with us at this Conference.

Let me now present a very brief summary of each project that the Task Force has undertaken to date.

**First**, Swedish Task Force representative have been leading an effort to assemble a catalog of Holocaust-related institutions and a survey to efforts currently underway in the field of Holocaust education around the world. This challenging task has begun in earnest, but is still in its early stages. In the Task Force report you will find a brief paper introducing a preliminary directory of organizations engaged in Holocaust education and remembrance activities in a large number of countries. We expect that the directory of organizations engaged in Holocaust education and remembrance activities in a large number of countries. We expect that the directory, itself a gold mine of information, will become the basis of a much more comprehensive survey of such efforts to be completed next year and to be made available internationally.

**Second**, as part of the Swedish government's Living History Initiative, Holocaust historian Paul Levine and Stephane Bruchfeld prepared a text on the Holocaust that could be made available to every family with high school children in Sweden. Their product, "Tell Ye Your Children," has been so well received in Sweden as to exceed all expectations. There are now almost 800,000 copies of the book in circulation in that country of approximately 9 million people, making it the second most-widely owned book in Sweden after the Bible. The

book has been translated into the most common immigrant languages in Sweden to increase its accessibility to non-native Swedish speakers. At the request of the Task Force, the book's authors have created an insert demonstrating how an international version and individual national versions of the book can be prepared, should other countries choose to consider adapting it for their own use. Sweden has also completed a series of videotapes for use in their school system.

**Third**, the Chief Historians of the U.S. Department of State and the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office will produce, at the request of the Task Force, a guide to finding and using Holocaust-related archives with the intention that it be employed as a tool by researchers and educators. The recent opening of archives bearing on the Holocaust, and in particular those related to Nazi gold and other looted assets, have made accessible millions of pages of material recent years and have had an important impact on our collective knowledge about the Holocaust. Making these archives more accessible is a central goal of the Task Force. Contained in this report is a brief proposal as to how activities in this area should proceed over the next year – highlighting in particular a website which is becoming a nexus of information for research in virtually every dimension of the Holocaust-era assets issues discussed at the London and Washington Conferences.

**Fourth**, in close consultation with Yad Vashem and U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the UK has led the effort to develop a set of internationally applicable guidelines, or best practices, for use in teaching about the Holocaust. In crafting the guidelines, the Task Force looked to those institutions with the most extensive experience in navigating the difficult waters of teaching this emotionally charged and intellectually taxing subject. The guidelines are intended to facilitate the work of educators both in places where programs exist and in those where they are yet to be developed. They are based on the experiences, both positive and negative, of two generations of Holocaust educators.

**Fifth**, the Task Force has considered and accepted a British proposal to encourage each of our nations to designate a Day of Remembrance for Holocaust Victims. In Israel and the United States, Yom HaShoa serves this purpose. In Germany, January 27, the day of the liberation of Auschwitz, is recognized. Other Task Force member countries will designate a day of their choosing on which to honor the memory of those who perished, and we will all make a concerted effort to ensure that our government employees and societies as a whole are aware of the day and recognize it appropriately. We hope other nations will designate their own Day of Remembrance as well. These acts of

remembrance will reinforce awareness of the event of the Holocaust and reach a large audience, while demonstrating solidarity in the fight against anti-Semitism, racism, prejudice, persecution, and hatred.

In addition to the projects I have already listed, the Task Force has made commitments in the form of two declarations: one concerning archival openness and the other the promotion of Holocaust education efforts. We invite all Washington Conference governments to join us in endorsing these goals. The Task Force Declaration on the opening of Holocaust-relevant archives presents as our aim the opening of “all public and private bearing on the Holocaust and the fate of Nazi-confiscated assets by December 31, 1999.” We call on all who possess such material to open it to as many researchers as possible on an urgent basis and commit ourselves a governments to do everything possible to ensure that this important target is met.

The second declaration and final element of the Task Force to the Conference emphasizes our common conviction that urgent international attention to paid to Holocaust education, remembrance and research to reinforce and spread the historic meaning and enduring lessons of that tragic event. In the declaration we commit our governments to “reinforce Holocaust education, remembrance and research in our own countries, with a special focus on our own countries’ histories.” We also pledge to strengthen existing programs or launch new ones, and encourage other countries to do likewise.

We have pledged our governments’ commitment to this endeavor, and to our intergovernmental cooperation to advance its objectives, principally to ensure that the lessons of the Holocaust are not forgotten and its horrors never repeated. We have full confidence that when the U.S. chairmanship concludes at the end of the month, the UK will serve the Task Force admirably in the role of Chairman. We furthermore hope that Conference participants will find the report of the Task Force a valuable and useful contribution to the cause of Holocaust education, remembrance and research.

Most important, whether by working with us through the Task Force or through other mechanisms, we hope that all countries represented at the Washington Conference will choose to embrace our goals and strengthen their Holocaust education and remembrance efforts. Because our effort is an inclusive one, we also urge other countries to consider working directly with us in the Task Force. Nothing could be more important than to honor the many victims and to prevent such tragedies in the future.



# Mr. Pär Nuder

STATE SECRETARY, PRIME'S MINISTER'S OFFICE  
SWEDEN

## Break-out Session: Goals of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The book that you have in front of you, *Tell ye your children...* forms the core of the Swedish information campaign about the Holocaust. On page 50 you will find two pictures.

One shows a group of naked women huddled close together as they line up. Some are holding children in their arms. Although the Pietism is indistinct, you can see, you can sense, the fear in their eyes.

The other picture shows the same group of women. This time lying dead in a heap. Among the dead bodies a small head is sticking out. One child remains alive. His executioner stands close by, rifle raised.

This child, perhaps aged two or three, could have been your child or grandchild.

These terrible events, which took place fifty years ago on the continent of Europe, must never ever be repeated. The Nazi crimes against humanity must never ever happen again.

Motivated by this conviction, the Swedish Government, supported by broad political consensus, initiated the information campaign known as *Living History*.

So far more than 500,000 households have ordered the book *Tell ye your children..* to help adult members of the family pass on knowledge about the Holocaust to the younger generation. 800,000 copies of the book have been distributed. Extrapolated to an equivalent number of families in Great Britain, this equals 2.5 million books. In the US this would be 10 million copies. 100,000 people have visited the Living History Web site. 1000 schools have shown movies offered as part of the information campaign.

By choosing active dialogue instead of passive silence, we decided to initiate a discussion of ways to develop democracy, strengthening its powers of resistance, and increasing our understanding of the challenges to it. We wanted to make everyone aware of the negative forces behind the Holocaust.

The Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel once said that it is necessary to remember, because if we forget the crimes of the past we are doomed to repeat them. He meant that if one group of people can be killed, any group of people can be killed.

He was right of course, democracy gives life its moral purpose. It is built on an understanding and, awareness, it rests on the tacit agreement that we all try to live by the set of values which it represents.

To cite the words of British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, in another context. Our society, he said, rests on,

"A set of values- A belief in society. In co-operation. In achieving what we are unable to achieve alone. It is how I try to live my life. The simple truths. I am worth no more than anyone else. I am my brother's keeper. I will not walk by on the other side. We aren't simply people set in isolation from each other, face to face with eternity, but members of the same family, community, the same human race."

Mr. Chairman,

These simple truths - so simple, so difficult to live up to.

Democracy is vulnerable if we forget.

We must fight ignorance with facts and knowledge.

We must tell its story, We must repudiate without compromise every new manifestation that violates democracy and human dignity. We must summon the courage to be clear and resolute.

This responsibility lies with each and everyone of us who has children. Our parents know and have told us. If we don't remember, if we don't have the strength, if we don't have the courage - then we have failed those who died and those who survived. Then we will fail coming generations.

The Swedish *Living History* project used the exhortation in the Old Testament as the title of the book which has become the symbol of the project: "Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation."

In response to the immensely positive reaction to Prime Minister Persson's initiative on Holocaust education the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research was established in Stockholm in May of this year. It is a platform for international cooperation to spread knowledge about the Holocaust. This group will continue its work, in particular this conference has acted as an important stimulus for further action.

Mr. Chairman,

In a year's time, mankind will enter a new millennium. We are leaving the 20th century and entering the 21st.

What can we learn from the past?

What should we leave behind us 'in the old millennium?

What fundamental values should we take with us into the new age?

We need to discuss these issues – as individuals, as human beings, as parents.

We live in an age of rapid transition, Information hurtles around the globe at the speed of light. In an age such as this we all need basic values: founded upon simple truths. Simple truths such as, I am worth no more than anyone else.

No single event can never replace the need for a constant dialogue about values and ideas, about right and wrong. But as the present millennium, which gave us the darkest event in the history of mankind, the Holocaust, draws to an end we should let the new millennium begin with an event that contains a bright and hopeful message of humanism. We need an event that deals with the past in a way that will prevent us from repeating its horrors.

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of Prime Minister Persson and the Swedish Government I would like to extend an invitation to governments, institutions, NGOs and experts dedicated to Holocaust education to attend an international conference in Stockholm on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research at the turn of the millennium.

This conference will be held under the auspices of high-ranking political, civic and religious leaders and be devoted to all aspects of Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. Politicians, historians, educators, curators, artists, authors and other experts shall meet in work-shops and seminars to discuss how they can contribute to Holocaust education, and to share their experiences. I propose that the Task Force serve as a kind of preparatory committee for this conference on Holocaust Education in Stockholm,

The aim of the Stockholm Conference will be to manifest our common commitment to teaching our children that there is always a choice, there is always an alternative. It is our responsibility to endow them with the ability to distinguish between good and evil.

I would like to conclude by quoting one of the finest educators of young children - Swedish author Astrid Lindgren, "mother" of Pippi

Longstocking and Karlsson on the Roof. Through her characters, she has untiringly taught children about the right choices in the complex world of adults, adults who sometimes fail to fulfill a child's expectations of care and guidance.

"Sometimes we have to do things, even though we don't really dare. Otherwise we aren't human, just a speck of dirt."

Thank you.

# **Dr. Avner Shalev**

CHAIRMAN OF THE DIRECTORATE, YAD VASHEM  
ISRAEL

## **Break-out Session: Goals of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research**

The International Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, was established at the initiative of the Swedish Government. It is an exciting new undertaking which the Delegation of Israel, a member of the Task Force, enthusiastically supports.

Yad Vashem, in co-ordination with other Israeli institutions dealing with the legacy of the Holocaust, looks forward to sharing with other countries the experience it has gained over several decades and agrees to coordinate future international meetings of educational experts, with the Task Force.

Yad Vashem will cooperate with the Task Force in its efforts to spread programs on Holocaust education through the Internet and other media and will put the educational principles developed in Israel, (including those achieved at its international teacher training courses) at the Task Force's disposal.

We welcome the idea put forward by the United Kingdom to establish a national day in every country to commemorate the Shoah.

We add our voice to those who believe that the Holocaust, because of its Jewish specificity, should serve as a model in the global fight against the dangers of racism, anti-Semitism, ethnic hatred and genocide.

Together with our fellow Task Force members, Israel will do its utmost to advance our common goals in this important and promising endeavor.



# **Dr. Albert Spiegel**

DEPUTY HEAD, CULTURAL SECTION, FOREIGN OFFICE  
GERMANY

## **Break-out Session: Goals of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research**

This conference deals with the most terrible chapter of German history: the Holocaust, the persecution and extermination of European Jews by the National Socialists. I welcome the fact that this task force has been set up within this conference to deal with the important problem of how the Holocaust can be portrayed above all to young people more than 50 years after the end of National Socialism.

Today's democratic Germany admits full responsibility for the guilt which Germans burdened themselves with during the years of National Socialist control of large parts of Europe and their own country. Hence, imparting knowledge of the terrible events of this period to today's and future young generations is an indispensable task of the education system.

Today's Germans cannot draw a line under the past. We can only learn from it and thereby ensure that such a crime does not happen again.

We gladly accepted the invitation for Germany to participate in establishing international cooperation in imparting knowledge of the Holocaust. In Germany, we also see this as significant recognition of our long-standing efforts to make teaching about the Holocaust a focal point of the educational work on the agendas of the German federal states responsible for education as well as the related areas of general youth work, adult education, teaching about memorials and educational research.

1. What could be the aim and object of increased international cooperation over and above the initial steps which have already been taken in this area?

The imparting of knowledge of the Holocaust is a topic which each country must approach in a particular way. Israel, as the country built up by survivors of the Holocaust, and Germany, as the country where the Holocaust started and which today bears responsibility for it, inevitably have to tackle this question differently from countries which were less or only indirectly involved. In Germany, we face the challenge

of teaching young people about crimes of which their forefathers were either perpetrators or passive observers.

The Holocaust raises questions which are crucial for every civilization and every culture. Why did civilized, often educated people become murderers? How did an effective and modern state machinery come to be abused as an almost perfect instrument of state mass murder? Why did a whole country, and to a certain extent neighboring countries, turn a blind eye?

An important task for all of us today is to find answers to such questions and draw conclusions for our future together.

The differing situations of countries as they approach the issue of Holocaust education are reason enough for fruitful international cooperation. It would be important to devise joint programs for young people from different countries who, on meeting others, would have the opportunity to exchange their various national viewpoints. What possibilities would be opened up by organizing teacher training in this field at international level? If Holocaust education is viewed as a truly international task, then we must learn from one another and with one another.

The original scenes of the Holocaust, in Germany and the neighboring countries to the east, are to be included directly in teaching. More intensive use should be made of teaching about memorials within the framework of international cooperation. As well as imparting knowledge, carefully prepared bilateral or multilateral events at the places themselves could be useful for portraying the essential emotional elements of the Holocaust subject.

Vast opportunities are contained in the initiative to make Holocaust education an international issue. International cooperation should aim to complement national programs and add to them what can only evolve from different countries comparing views. I am thinking here, for example, of jointly devising and coordinating curricula and programs which reflect the various national perceptions.

Much has already been done to this end in Germany, for example in the development of new schoolbooks in cooperation with experts from Israel and Poland. During bilateral German-Israeli talks on schoolbooks, the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Braunschweig, whose first series was completed in 1985, aimed to develop guidelines for the portrayal of "the other side" in schoolbooks. Events following the Holocaust, in particular German-Israeli relations as a whole, are also outlined. The aim is to make it possible for today's children and young people in both countries to have the same



unprejudiced knowledge of the Holocaust, as well as of other aspects of their common history.

2. As we deal with the Holocaust, we also have to ask ourselves what we want to achieve amongst the people of today who are living more than fifty years after the crimes of National Socialism and who are quite often more interested in other things.

I would like to focus briefly on Germany in particular with its specific situation. In Germany today, we have a generation which no longer feels directly involved with the crimes which took place in their grandparents' and great-grandparents' time. Nowadays, young Germans want to be regarded for the most part as normal Europeans but see over and over again that the word "German" triggers associations with National Socialism. Holocaust education has been a part of all school curricula for decades, just as visits to memorial sites have been. The Day to commemorate the victims of National Socialism on January 27 (the liberation of Auschwitz) and the night of the pogrom on November 9 are dates of remembrance all over Germany.

And yet in Germany today, just as in other European countries, there are some young people who feel attracted by extreme right sometimes anti-Semitic ideas, and believe they provide the answers to today's problems.

In teaching about the Holocaust, it is not a question of bare facts; it is a question of imparting to people the fathomlessness of a crime planned at state level, a crime that few teachers are able to understand properly nowadays. It is also a question of drawing upon the personal experience of the students. In Germany this now includes contact with fellow citizens of foreign origin as well as the experience of a globalized culture and economy.

It must also be remembered that in one part of our country, the former GDR, the biased analysis of the National Socialism period centered for forty years on the persecution of political, and above all communist, opponents of National Socialism. The collapse of communism has left a particular void of values there.

3. When speaking of the possibilities of international cooperation on the question of Holocaust education, we must also consider the qualitative aspect. Imparting knowledge of such a unique crime must not be ticked off as material for lessons, or a burdensome duty. Education about the Holocaust remains ineffective unless teachers manage to portray the deep emotional side of the Holocaust as well as the feeling for the unwarranted, dreadful suffering of millions of victims. And of course it also depends on the environment for teaching about the

Holocaust. What do parents say and think of the problem, what influences have youth culture trends? How does it happen that many young people feel it is somehow "cool" to express ideas on the far right of the political spectrum? These trends can be seen the world over, and I believe this to be an obvious starting point for international cooperation on teaching about the Holocaust. Because it is not just lack of knowledge of the facts of the Holocaust which leads to people's indifferent attitude to events. Now and then, there is also the view that the Holocaust is history while we ourselves live in the present. This is a point for our efforts to start.

It also must not be forgotten that teaching about the Holocaust cannot be better than general standards of education and of imparting knowledge and values in a particular country. We have all heard the discussions on the quality of education which have been going on in many countries for years. It is important that general education furthers the aims of the rule of law, human rights and tolerance.

We ought to try to make a valuable contribution to this general discussion through international cooperation on Holocaust education.

Today in Germany there is a whole array of projects, initiated by schools and young people to increase understanding of the Holocaust and show its repercussions up to the present day. Many of these projects are transmitted all over the world via the Internet. Schoolchildren in Berlin have tackled the topic of the synagogue destroyed in 1938. Students in East Frisia are carefully examining how the often difficult and yet periodically positive coexistence of Jews and Christians in their town has evolved over the centuries. Other young people erect or maintain memorials in their local area. The Action Reconciliation Service for Peace which has been working closely for many years with Israeli partners organizes many encounters for young people from both countries.

There is a common element in all these examples: they link the portrayal of the local area, of the attachment to the town or area in which the children or young people grow up, with the portrayal of the negative events that belong to the area. I know that many people who otherwise show little interest in the Holocaust are very upset when they realize that such crimes did not take place just anywhere but rather in their town, in their street or perhaps even in their own house. In Berlin, schoolchildren have put up names of murdered Jewish citizens on the houses where they once lived. That is both education and remembrance which touches many. And it also shows that Jewish life and Jewish culture was not out of place in Germany as the National Socialists maintained, rather an

integral part of our own German history and culture; but at the same time, also an autonomous cultural world, to which Germany owed a great deal. I believe that anyone who grasps and accepts this has drawn one of the most important lessons from the Holocaust: Christian and Jewish people have lived side by side in Germany for centuries. Viewing the historical roots of the incomprehensible can also help explain on the one hand why the Holocaust was able to happen in Germany and on the other hand why it is so difficult to understand.

Such projects carried out in Germany offer a range of possibilities for cooperation with other countries. Examples can already be identified. In the large Jewish graveyard in Berlin-Weißensee, German, Israeli and Polish young people work together on the upkeep of graves. Particularly in the field of German-Polish relations, there is a whole array of similar programs.

We have already done a lot in Germany. But I also know that the issue of the Holocaust will persist for a long time. Holocaust education also has a topical dimension. Children and young people should be brought up to cope responsibly with freedom, to be tolerant, to have a peaceful attitude towards other people and respect others in a spirit of international understanding. Only such an attitude guarantees that a crime such as the Holocaust can never be repeated.

This conference could help us to find new ways of doing this.

4. The basis of all education about the Holocaust is the existence of scientifically supported, high-quality materials. In Germany, our vast range of documentation and teaching material is constantly expanded also using modern methods of communication. The discoveries made by extensive Holocaust research carried out at universities, institutes and other research centers in Germany influence the further development of the curricula directly through teacher training and new editions of textbooks.

Perhaps our long experience and the discoveries made from teaching the children and grandchildren of the generation in whose younger days the atrocities actually took place could serve as an example and a stimulus for education in your country.

On behalf of Germany, I can assure you that we are keen to work actively in the task force and in so doing hope to make a further contribution to strengthening tolerance and human rights for the future.



# **Ms. Regina Wyrwoll**

HEAD OF MEDIA DIVISION, GOETHE-INSTITUT, MUNICH  
GERMANY

## **Learning from History: The Nazi Era and the Holocaust in German Education**

*A CD-ROM edited by Annette Brinkmann, Annegret Ehmann, Sybil Milton, Hanns.Fred Rathenow, and Regina Wyrwoll*

### **Break-out Session: Best Practices and Future Projects in Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research: Remembrance**

The CD-ROM "Learning from History" presents (both in English and in German) 50 projects that show the varieties of ways that the Holocaust is taught in Germany's sixteen states since 1990. The fifty projects were selected from an extensive survey of Holocaust education activities in Germany. These projects originated in primary and secondary schools, special classes for the learning-disabled, in programs for apprentices in trade and commercial schools, at memorial sites and foundations.

The CD-ROM, unique in the world, provides insights into best practices in classrooms and independent programs for youth in contemporary Germany.

The CD-ROM provides a significant view of how the history of the Holocaust is taught in contemporary Germany. It thus offers North American teachers a rich range of ideas and strategies for helping young people understand the historical facts and continuing significance of Holocaust education in the world of today and tomorrow.

This survey is especially important because it allows North American teachers to enter into direct dialogue with their German counterparts.

Most projects focus on the fate of the Jews in Germany. Nevertheless, there are also projects about the fate of the disabled, Gypsies (Roma/Sinti), the White Rose resistance movement, perpetrator

biographies, and postwar trials. The projects include children's music at Theresienstadt ("Brundibar"), songs of the political resistance written in the early concentration camps ("The Peat Bog Soldiers"), student literary texts after a visit to the memorial at Natzweiler-Struthof, plays about Janusz Korczak and deportation to Auschwitz performed by students, and materials about the treasury and tax departments' role in the persecution of Jews. There are also projects about archeological digs by students at the Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, and Sachsenhausen memorials, as well as apprentice stonemasons and construction workers assisting in the repair and restoration of buildings at the Sachsenhausen memorial.

The projects are interdisciplinary, combining history, German language and literature, social studies, music, art, law, and ethics, originating in formal classroom instruction and students activities in independent projects in non-school settings. The CD-ROM includes the teacher's lesson plan and reports as well as student products (artwork, literary and historical texts, theater and musical pieces, videos made by students), extracts from memoirs written by victims and survivors, as well as interrogations from postwar trials.

The CD-ROM contains extensive supplementary materials, including maps, a list of memorials, a glossary of historical terms, addresses of all institutions in Germany that deal with Holocaust education, lists of media available for teachers for use in schools, and a bilingual booklet with background about the German educational system and how to use the CD-ROM.

A complementary website will be launched by Spring 1999 with information about significant new projects, activities, current and planned exhibitions in Germany, as well as links to existing websites at German and foreign institutions that provide or produce significant material for Holocaust education.

Scholarly advisory groups from both Germany and the United States have overseen the projects, including Annegret Ehmman (House of the Wannsee Conference), Professor Hanns-Fred Rathenow (Institute for Didactics, Technical University Berlin), Sybil Milton (former Senior Historian at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum). The CD-ROM was tested by North American teachers and benefited greatly from scholarly expertise provided by the Association of Holocaust Organizations and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C.

The CD-ROM has been produced with the support from the Archive for Cultural Policy, Bonn, The Fund for Cultural Education, Bonn, The Goethe-Institut, Munich, The Robert Bosch Foundation, Stuttgart, and the Press and Information Office of the German Federal Government, Bonn.





# **Mr. Kenneth Jacobson**

ASSISTANT NATIONAL DIRECTOR , ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE  
UNITED STATES

## **ADL's Holocaust Programming: Education, Reconciliation, Atonement**

Break-out Session: Best Practices and Future Projects in Holocaust  
Education, Remembrance and Research: Remembrance

In a society and Jewish community where there is a large amount of activity concerning the Holocaust, ADL tries to focus its work on those areas which are consistent with the mission of the organization and which reflect and intermesh with our programmatic strengths in other areas.

ADL's mission for 85 years has been to fight anti-Semitism and to combat other forms of hatred. Our Holocaust programs serve to meet those challenges, educating how the history of anti-Semitism culminated in the Shoah and how this tragic history has relevance to broader issues of bias and intolerance in today's world.

ADL's Holocaust programming is filtered through our **Braun Holocaust Institute**. Education, remembrance and research are the three major facets of the Institute, and they are carried out in conjunction with and strengthened by a unique range of institutional programs including ADL's Youth Services, our Interfaith Affairs and our Civil Rights work.

The work of the **Braun Holocaust Institute** utilizes the professional and lay leadership services of its 31 Regional Offices across the U.S. and in Austria and Israel. Thus, the Holocaust Institute is able to outreach and effectively channel its centralized services and programs to serve the needs and interests of a particular community.

Programmatically, the work of the **Braun Holocaust Institute** takes several approaches emphasizing the strengths of ADL.

## EDUCATION OF YOUNG STUDENTS

The ADL's Youth Programs including A World of Difference and Children of the Dream (which brings Ethiopian Jews from Israel to meet with inner city youngsters) target high school age youth. Across the U.S., thousands of teachers and students (through peer training) and teachers through (Train the Trainer Programs) incorporate Holocaust Education as a significant component in lessons on anti-bias. Through one chapter in the Anti-Bias Curriculum, through supplementary holocaust discussion and curriculum guides, films, and first hand survivor testimony, the Braun Holocaust augments the work of these programs by demonstrating the lessons of the Holocaust as one extreme manifestation of hate.

Particularly successful is the National Youth Mission to Washington, D.C. This program combines the work of community service, civil rights, Holocaust education and diversity anti-bias programs by bringing together 80 students from around the U.S., students of a diverse ethnic and racial background to the USHMM in Washington, D.C. For four days they not only learn about the Holocaust, but they learn about its lessons and relevance to contemporary society.

## INTERFAITH

ADL's interfaith programs, both in the U.S. and abroad, have particular strength in training Christian teachers and seminarians about the way to educate about Judaism in order to reduce and eliminate religious anti-Semitism. Our Holocaust programming takes advantage of these strengths by developing services, commemorations and symposiums stressing atonement, reconciliation, and coalition building.

While acknowledging the silence of most of the world, rare acts of courage on the part of individuals and nations are remembered through programs from **The Jewish Foundation for Christian Rescuers**. For example, the National Holocaust commemoration program "From Shoah to New Life: Honoring Italian Rescuers" (Last year, honored Albanian Rescuers.) Each year this program, along with "Courage to Care" commemoration will look at the rare and noble Christians and Moslems who assisted Jews during the Holocaust...individuals who made a difference.

A particularly impressive interfaith effort regarding the Holocaust is ADL's 'Bearing Witness Program.' This program targets

Catholic School educators and works in conjunction with the USHMM, The National Conference of Bishops, and The National Catholic Education Association. For five days Catholic teachers from all over the U.S. came to D.C. to learn about ways they can implement Holocaust education in their schools and community. In addition to providing overall instruction on the Holocaust, the content of this program is geared specifically to the needs and interests of parochial school teachers and students. It sees the Holocaust in the context of Christian anti-Semitism and other biases. It is a program which reflects the vast improvement in Catholic-Jewish relations (such a program could not have happened decades ago), and fosters continued openness.

### EDUCATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

ADL has extensive programs around the country to help students, faculty, and administrators deal with anti-Semitism and bias. Our Holocaust programming directs itself to editors of campus newspapers who are repeatedly confronted by efforts of Holocaust deniers to get their hateful message to the students. While being a staunch defender of free speech, ADL makes clear to editors that they are under no First Amendment obligation to publish advertisements advocating denial of the Holocaust, which are intrinsically hateful and inaccurate. In our further effort to educate editors, we sponsor an annual Mission to Israel, which includes a stop in Poland to experience first-hand the camps where Jews were murdered.

### CIVIL RIGHTS AND HOLOCAUST DENIAL

A major task of ADL's civil rights programs is to prevent extremist, anti-Semitic groups from gaining credibility and legitimacy. We recognize that a major obstacle to the resurgence of Nazism and Fascism over the past 50 years has been the taint of the Holocaust. Extremist groups see Holocaust denial as a key ingredient for their goal of renewed respectability; convince enough people that the Holocaust didn't happen and the road is open to winning renewed respectability. That is why we take seriously our work to combat Holocaust denial, including reports and investigations on the movement and the groups that foster it, as well as monitoring and countering such activity on the Internet.

## THE JEWISH FOUNDATION FOR CHRISTIAN RESCUERS AND THE HIDDEN CHILD FOUNDATION

While keeping the focus of the Holocaust on its evil and the absence of enough courageous people to stand against the Nazis, we also try to impart the lessons of what happened when individuals acted to save Jews. We give a Courage to Care Award to highlight those who rescued. We have established a Sugihara Essay Writing contest, first in the New York City Publish School System, now in San Francisco and Japan, which looks at the example of the rescuer Chiume Sugihara and asks the students to look at their own lives and depict an occasion where they made a difference.

The Hidden Child Foundation brings together those survivors who had been hidden as children from the Nazis. Through the ADL Braun Institute, a National Speakers bureau has been formed and a Hidden Child Discussion Guide developed. The Foundation works with educators at Teacher Training and Student Workshops on the Holocaust and organized conferences and gatherings for Survivors and Second Generations.

## PUBLICATIONS AND MATERIALS

Consistent with our broader educational effort, the Institute provides and develops a number of educational materials on the Holocaust including discussion guides, curriculums, and background primers. *Dimensions: A Journal of Holocaust Studies* reaches out to a broad community in providing a forum for debate on topics that are both controversial and extremely relevant to contemporary society. Each issue focuses on one aspect of the Holocaust – the churches, rescuing science, culture, historiography, etc. – and provides wide-ranging perspectives from top scholars and thinkers, which make for excellent educational tools in and out of the classroom.

A new vehicle to educate, is “The Lasting Impact of the Holocaust on the Arts,” a series that seeks to spur a new public awareness of the Holocaust through presenting creative and artistic works of survivors, second generation, and others who are profoundly impacted by the Holocaust.

Educating about the Holocaust will be a continuous challenge as we move further and further away from that great tragedy. As one thoughtful political leader in Germany has recently said, we must find

new and creative ways to teach each new generation as the years make for greater distance. We are committed to using the many strengths of ADL to participate in this challenging mission in the years ahead.

Kenneth Jacobson  
Assistant National Director  
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823 United Nations Plaza  
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**Mrs. Vladka Meed**  
AMERICAN GATHERING OF JEWISH  
HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

**Life and Resistance during the Holocaust**

Break-out Session: Best Practices and Future Projects in Holocaust  
Education, Remembrance and Research: Curricular Education

There is a growing awareness in our country, as well as in other countries, of the need to transmit the events and the lessons of the Holocaust to coming generations. More and more studies about our shattering past are making their way into the American public school system. And we, the survivors, the last eyewitnesses, are concerned. How will our people be remembered? Will history do them justice? Will myths and half-truths prevail? Or will the young only learn the frightening numbers of deaths, the clinical aspects of planned destruction? Or will they be able to see beyond the numbers of mass murders the victims as people -- as individuals who struggled to remain human in a world which was so inhuman? Will they be able to understand the life of the individual who was ground to dust in the gigantic murder machine and is still waiting to be raised out of the abyss of death, to be seen in full light?

For the last 14 years I have been privileged to lead an educational program – a three-week Summer Seminar on the Holocaust and Jewish Resistance for American high school teachers, who implement Holocaust studies in their schools. The program embraces all aspects of the Holocaust era with special emphases on Jewish resistance in all its forms. We travel to Israel, with a stop in Poland. The teachers go to the former death camps. In Auschwitz they see the heaps of hair, eyeglasses, valises with the names of the victims, the blown up crematoria in Birkenau. And in Majdanek, they see the mountain of shoes. In Treblinka they walk on the road which lead to the gas chambers. They touch history. Everything around them speaks of torture

of death I walk with them and want so much to show them a glimpse of the Jewish life which once existed -- and is no more.

Splinters of memory – I see again and again my home in the Warsaw Ghetto; my worn-out mother, with eyes puffy from starvation, hiding a piece of bread from us hungry children - the payment for the old tutor who was preparing my brother for his Bar Mitzvah, which he never lived to see. I see our neighbor selling saccharine and watching for approaching Germans, while upstairs her daughter holds illegal classes. I see Jews, with faces covered to hide their beards, rushing to secret synagogues. I see the faces of friends, both young and old, whom I met at secret meetings -- the organizers of illegal cultural, social and political activities in the ghetto - until they all were caught up in the Nazi vise and sent to the gas chambers of Treblinka. Yes, this was resistance – to survive as a people and a spirit that refused to be crushed. This was the soil in which the seeds of armed resistance took hold.

Now after 50 years, historical facts connected with organized, armed resistance, mostly carried out by the idealistic Jewish youth from various political groups, are more or less known. And it seems to me that a primary task today should be to individualize the young fighters, to elaborate more about their lives, their homes, their thoughts and beliefs which shaped their personalities and their actions in decisive times and which helped shape our history.

Despite the vast body of Holocaust literature, still little is known of the remarkable life that was destroyed. Yes, beyond starvation, terror, fear and killing, there was life – life filled with meaning, with loyalty, with sacrifice, with hope. Documenting this aspect of Jewish life in Europe, before and during the era of Nazi horrors, is a fundamental challenge facing scholars, writers and educators today.

The teachers in the program on "Holocaust and Jewish Resistance" learn about this remarkable world. They learn as well about all forms of Jewish resistance through lectures by prominent scholars at the renowned Holocaust Center at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and at the Study Center of Lohamei Haghetat; through testimonies by survivors, through workshops and trips to historic sites. We try to give them a deeper understanding of the life before and during the Holocaust. And this chapter of history should not only be written by historians basing their knowledge on documents and books, but they should include more about the experiences of the survivors who lived this history with their own flesh and blood.

Yes, teachers have a special warm relationship with survivors whom they meet at the conferences or in their classrooms when they give



testimony. They respect them and our survivors leave a deep impression on their students.

The experiences which our teachers share during the intensive 3-week seminar, forge deep and lasting bonds. An alumni family was formed by our program. Alumni Conferences, co-sponsored by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, are being organized featuring lectures and workshops. An alumni Newsletter is being regularly published. Our teachers maintain contact with each other as well as with the program leaders. They are recognized in their communities and states as respected advisors on Holocaust education. They serve on Holocaust commissions, organize seminar, write curricula. It is impossible to list all their work and achievements.

Permit me, finally, to share with you a few lines from John Iiori, a teacher from Jacksonville, FL. He wrote to us: "The unique program in which I participated in 1990 changed the way I look at every day life. For 3 years I checked boxcars as an employee for a railroad company. Today, as a teacher, I cannot see a railroad track without seeing Treblinka and the gate at Birkenau. The bond we teachers now have will not break. We will continue to teach, to bear witness, long after the survivors are gone. This is the mission we educators have accepted."

Yes, these teachers are the link between our past and present. They can transmit our memories, our warnings, our fears and our hope for the future.



# **Dr. Robert Sigel**

JOSEF EFFNER HIGH SCHOOL, DACHAU  
GERMANY

## **Holocaust Education in Germany**

### **Break-out Session: Best Practices and Future Projects in Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research: Curricular Education**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a teacher of a German High School in Dachau and as a historian who works on the educational guidelines as a part of the reconceptualization of the Dachau concentration camp memorial site I will present a short survey on the subject.

In the international guidelines on Holocaust Education - a British draft for the Task Force declaration - one can read in point 4 concerning the age of the students:

“Teachers tend to favor age 10-14 as the best time to introduce the subject, in terms of the students’ educational and emotional

In the Internet you were able to find the outline on the curriculum of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education. This outline covers the age group Kindergarten up to 12th grade students.

The Holocaust Human Rights Center of Maine has developed a guide titled, “Teaching about diversity, Prejudice, Human Rights and the Holocaust. For Grades Kindergarten through Four.”

If you ask teachers in Germany if it was reasonable to teach children in Kindergarten or ten-year-old students about the Holocaust, most teachers would reject the idea.

Considering these different attitudes, one should ask oneself what is understood by Holocaust Education.

- Is Holocaust Education moral education in general?
- Is it teaching tolerance?
- Is it a kind of peace education?

- Is it imparting values to the students?
- Is it instilling a sense of understanding for diversity?

If you understand all of these by Holocaust Education, there is no reason why you should not start as early as Kindergarten.

In Germany of course all these values are part of education, of any kind of education, but Holocaust Education in Germany means something different. Holocaust Education in our country is mainly “teaching about the Holocaust.” It means teaching and studying the historical period of National Socialism in Germany and Europe and the persecution and extermination of European Jewry.

In Germany as a federal state it is the 16 Länder that are responsible for education, schooling and research. The curricula on this subject however are not very different from each other.

Holocaust Education in Germany takes place mainly and primarily in the history lessons. At the age of about 15 years the students learn the history of the 20th century and the period of National Socialism and in this context the Holocaust is given ample space. The fact that this subject is taught again on the secondary level shows what emphasis is laid on teaching about the Holocaust.

The main focus of these lessons is on cognitive studies. We believe that the accurate and detailed knowledge of what happened and how it happened is the indispensable basis.

- The basis for a lasting emotional empathy.
- The basis to immunize against all attempts to deny the Holocaust.
- The basis to resist racism and neonazism.

Being the country of the perpetrators Germany has a great number of memorial sites, the former concentration camps Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen etc.

A guided tour of these authentic places, where the traces of persecution and terror can still be seen, has a powerful impact on visitors.

Such a visit is strongly recommended to school classes by the ministries of education. During these visits the guide and the teacher have the opportunity to show individual biographies of prisoners, to show how they were humiliated, tortured and often murdered, to visualize the prisoners living conditions in a concentration camp, at the roll call place, in front of the barracks, inside the crematorium.

Whenever it is possible to include former concentration camp prisoners, eyewitnesses, and survivors of the Holocaust in the guided tours, in a conversation with the students, in a workshop, this opportunity

is certainly taken. Apart from the history lessons and the visits to a memorial site the Holocaust is also a topic in lessons of religious education, literature and civics.

Since the founding of the German Federal Republic the Holocaust has always been part of the curriculum. It goes without saying that the treatment of this topic has been different and more intensive since the late seventies.

The results of scientific research have found their way into schools; new aspects have been introduced: rescuers, conditions in concentration camps, perpetrators.

My synopsis would therefore be:

- The Holocaust is an important topic in curricula, lessons, schoolbooks and other teaching materials on all levels.
- Holocaust Education in Germany means teaching the Holocaust as a specific historical event, the consequences of which have an impact in the present and will have one in the future.
- We do, of course, expect that studying the Holocaust leads to attitudes and perceptions which are important for a democratic society and prevent similar events from happening in the future.
- Holocaust Education in the wider sense as defined at the start of my talk does not exist as a term or as a curriculum in itself in Germany, but its contents are of course taught.
- International cooperation will be useful and helpful in the following areas:
  - Exchange of teaching materials and teaching approaches.
  - Exchange of experience between educators and teachers of different countries and international teacher training.
  - Student exchange programs with joined workshops and projects on the topic.

German educators, teachers and institutions are certainly prepared to share their experience and knowledge with colleagues abroad and are eager to learn and profit from the experience of their colleagues.



# **Margot Stern Strom**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES NATIONAL FOUNDATION  
UNITED STATES

## **Break-out Session: Best Practices and Future Projects in Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research: Curricular Education**

Thank you so much for inviting Facing History and Ourselves to participate in the Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets. I am honored to be among such a distinguished group of panelists and participants. I would like to assure you that Facing History and Ourselves is eager to be involved in this innovative, precedent-setting international approach to Holocaust education. It would be a great honor to work with the committee and such scholars as Yehuda Bauer.

Facing History and Ourselves provides a nationally and internationally-recognized educational program that focuses on the events that led to the Holocaust as well as the Holocaust itself. In so doing, we explore the universal themes that connect that history to the moral choices young people confront each day. We are positioned to reinforce and strengthen our outreach in Holocaust education, both in communities we already serve and in those where this vital education has been overlooked. Our core work builds public awareness of the Holocaust through professional development for with middle and high school educators – both in the US and in Europe. Our work is informed by our experience in adapting our materials and approaches to the needs of particular nations.

Facing History and Ourselves is a non-profit educational organization whose mission is to promote democratic citizenship through curriculum and strategies for teachers, students and communities. Through workshops, institutes and public events, educators learn to engage students in a study of history and ethics.

With a national office in Brookline, Massachusetts and regional offices in New York, Memphis, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, Facing History annually conducts more than twenty 5-day institutes, over two dozen advanced seminars and workshops, and ongoing, technical assistance to teachers. Our Resource Center makes available to educators books, films, slides, articles and videotapes that

are integrated into classroom instruction. Founded in 1976, Facing History serves a growing network of over 10,000 educators in the US who reach one million students each year.

Facing History and Ourselves has written and published *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* (now in its second edition), which is the key resource book for the program. In cooperation with the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University, we developed videos for classroom use and an accompanying resource guide, *Elements of Time*. We have also published the writings of a member of our survivor network, *I Promised I Would Tell* by Sonia Schreiber Weitz. Our latest resource book is *The Jews of Poland*, which describes the rich life of the Jewish community in Poland before World War II and leads young people to an examination of their own personal identities.

Facing History and Ourselves produces materials that support multi-media projects in classrooms including a study guide to Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, and educational materials for the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation's recent CD-ROM *Survivors: Testimonies of the Holocaust*. This summer, Facing History and Ourselves was selected by Public Affairs Television, Inc. to produce and disseminate a study guide to accompany Bill Moyers' upcoming PBS broadcast, *Facing the Truth*, which documents the work of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Facing History brings Holocaust survivors into classrooms to tell their stories and to inspire young people to learn from history. We are actively involved with survivor networks in the Boston area and in our regions as well as with One Generation After. We work closely with leading Holocaust scholars, including Dr. Lawrence Langer and Dr. Michael Berenbaum, to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of our materials. Each year, members of Facing History's program staff undertake an intensive month-long study of the Holocaust at Yad Vashem.

For nearly 15 years, Facing History has explored the efforts of individuals and nations to respond to collective violence and heal the wounds of widespread atrocities. Our first Human Rights and Justice conference in 1985 was on the Nuremberg trials. Our most recent Annual Human Rights and Justice Conference in 1997, entitled *Collective Violence and Memory: Judgment, Reconciliation, Education*, was co-sponsored by the Harvard/Facing History Project and the Graduate Program at Harvard Law School. These conferences have been an



important vehicle for promoting awareness of these issues not only to educators but also the greater community.

At this most recent public forum, Dullah Omar, Minister of Justice of South Africa and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, member of the Human Rights Violation Committee of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, joined fellow panelists in an examination of the judicial, religious, psychological and political themes inherent in the varied responses to collective violence. As a result of the conference, Harvard Law School Professor Martha Minow's book, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence*, was released this fall from Beacon Press. Next week, we will host *Choosing to Participate: A Global Perspective*, a symposium which introduced Justice Richard Goldstone, the first chief prosecutor of the United Nations International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, to 400 community members in an examination of our role as citizens in an increasingly global society.

The Facing History and Ourselves program has repeatedly demonstrated its effectiveness. Since its inception, the program has undergone continuous external and internal evaluation. As a member of the National Diffusion Network, evaluation research was regularly submitted to an independent panel convened by the US Department of Education for validation. A current study sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of New York followed 400 students in Facing History and Ourselves classrooms as well as in comparison classes and found that students in our programs achieved greater gains in relationship maturity while reported violence decreased. The thinking of Facing History students moved towards more differentiated, complex, and reflective perspectives, while reported incidents of fighting went down.

In 1996, Facing History launched a new program to aid law enforcement personnel in connecting the Holocaust to the moral choices they face on the job daily. The project is designed to help officers better meet the diverse needs of the neighborhoods they serve and the goals of community policing. In a Department of Justice-funded project, the Boston Police Department and Facing History are partners with other local institutions in conducting regional community policing training institutes designed to advance community policing nationally. Facing History is also providing programs for other law enforcement agencies based on its educational model, including immigration officers, housing and school police forces. Recently, Senior Associate for Police and Community Programming Bill Johnston received the first-ever Civil Rights Award from the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

For the past twenty years, members of the Facing History program staff have traveled abroad to conduct workshops, deliver presentations at conferences, and study with scholars and local organizations at the site of the history about which we teach. In addition, educators from all over Europe continue to attend Facing History's professional development programs—both in the United States and in Europe—and meet with program staff and other scholars. To enrich this professional development, Facing History maintains strong connections to European educators, scholars and other experts who both learn from us and teach us about democracy and civic participation.

Facing History's full-time representative based in Switzerland, August Zemo, who is also in attendance at this conference today, develops and oversees our European activities. Beginning in 1992, Facing History's materials and methodologies have been adapted for use in schools in Western, Central and Eastern Europe. In those eight years we have held a series of teacher training seminars in Europe; held seminars on tolerance for students from state and international schools in Europe; participated in three study tours in Eastern Europe (a fourth is upcoming in spring, 1999); established working relationships with major research institutes in Europe including the Memorial House of the Wannsee Conference (Berlin), the Fritz Bauer Institute (Frankfurt am Main), Stichting Sintiwerk Best (the Netherlands), Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum (Oswiecim), the Center for Human Rights Education (Prague), and the Musee memorial des enfants d'izieu (France). We have also established ties with the International Romani Union and the Landelijke Sinti Organisatie. Our resource book has been translated for adoption into Hungarian state schools and we have recently been approached by the Slovak Republic to develop school textbooks and the Ministry of Education in Romania to integrate Facing History system-wide.

In Sweden, Facing History has recently conducted an institute in collaboration with Hedi Fried, a psychologist and Auschwitz survivor who is also in attendance today. The institute was sponsored by the Teachers College in Stockholm and the Teachers for Peace organization. Plans are underway for a similar institute in Norway.

Facing History has promoted public awareness of the Holocaust in the national and international media including NBC's *Today Show*, ABC's *American Agenda*, CNN and many local television outlets. Articles about Facing History have appeared in *The Boston Globe*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The London Times*, and *Le Monde*, as well as in a number of educational journals, including

*Columbia Teachers College Record*, *Harvard Education Review*, *Education Week*, *Educational Leadership*, and *English Journal*. Internationally, we have been cited in UNESCO's Human Rights journal, and educational journals in Germany and Hungary. Currently, Facing History is working with a *Today Show* producer on a new segment about our work, tentatively scheduled for an April broadcast.

The work of Facing History and Ourselves has been supported by the Charles A. Dana Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Charles H. Revson Foundation, the Surdna Foundation, the Crown Family Foundation, the Covenant Foundation, state and federal government agencies, other major foundations and corporations, as well as individual donors. In 1994, we were awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant, which helped to build our endowment, which totals approximately \$2 million. The Facing History budget for fiscal 1998-99 totals \$7.9 million to support its programs and operation. Our current staff totals 74, both at the national office and in our regions.

Facing History and Ourselves was selected as a model program by the U.S. Department of Education's National Diffusion Network and for sixteen years received funding for national dissemination. Harvard University has recognized Facing History's expertise and joined with us in a multi-year project to address intolerance and violence among young people through research and the development of new curricular materials.

In 1997, I received the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Charles A. Dana Award for Pioneering Achievement in Education for Facing History's "role in creating an innovative curriculum on moral development." The Foundation recently awarded Facing History a two-year grant for its work in the area of academic standards in K-12 education. A recent citation from Northeastern University recognized that Facing History has "enable(d) millions of students to study the Holocaust; investigate the root causes of racism, anti-Semitism and violence and realize their obligations and capabilities as citizens in a democracy."

Facing History and Ourselves was selected by the President's Initiative on Race to appear on the White House web site under the heading, *Promising Practices*. Last year, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton spoke with Facing History and Ourselves students at Orchestra Hall in Chicago where she had heard Martin Luther King, Jr. speak in 1962. We have also been invited to serve on the National Advisory

Board of The Television Race Initiative, which is bringing national attention to issues of race in America.

As a non-profit organization with a proven capacity for dissemination nationally and internationally, Facing History and Ourselves would be happy to collaborate with or assist those who are working on Holocaust education issues. We stand ready to share what we know about developing and supporting teachers so that they can effectively address the critical issues raised by this history.

# **Dr. Marcia Sachs Littell**

DIRECTOR, NATIONAL ACADEMY FOR HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE  
TEACHER TRAINING  
RICHARD STOCKTON COLLEGE, NEW JERSEY  
UNITED STATES

## **Holocaust Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Breaking the Silence in 1945, Avoiding Premature Closure in 1999**

Break-out Session: Best Practices and Future Projects in Holocaust  
Education, Remembrance and Research: Curricular Education

In the years directly following liberation - there was silence -- stunning silence. From the Jewish Community, from the churches, from government agencies. During this time, the majority of Americans were comfortable with the silence. Even the word "Holocaust" did not come into current use until the 1960's.

The growing awareness in America of the significance of the Holocaust can be marked with the date 1960, with the publication and wide sale of the English edition of Elie Wiesel's classic: Night, which after four decades remains one of the most influential publications about the Holocaust.

Complementing this literary work was the first edition of Raoul Hilberg's scholarly work: The Destruction of the European Jews. This landmark work, using sources then available, carefully recorded the mass Nazi genocide of the Jews.

The trial of Adolf Eichmann and his execution on June 1, 1962 aroused intense interest all over the world. The trial was a major landmark of Holocaust awareness and education, although in different contexts for Americans than for Israelis. A major public and political breakthrough was delayed in the USA.

Americans received their first real jolt of awareness at the time of the Six Day War (1967) in Israel, when "a Second Holocaust" seemed threatened. With the realization that Jews might be destroyed in their homeland, not only Jews in the Diaspora were aroused: Christians friendly to Jewish survival were also moved to act.

Within three years, three important organizations resulted from Christian initiative in the United States: the National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel, the Christian Study Group on Israel and the Jewish People, and the Annual Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches. Of greatest outreach among the three was the Annual Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches. The Annual Scholars' Conference - interdisciplinary, interfaith and international - brought together for the first time Christian and Jewish Scholars to examine issues raised by the Holocaust and the response of the Churches - before, during and after the tragedy.

In March of 1999, in its 29th consecutive year, the conference will bring together c600 registrants from c25 countries. In recent years the Conference has also expanded to embrace teachers, clergy, survivors, community leaders and graduate students. It has each year rotated geographic location and academic co-sponsorship around the United States. At first the Annual Scholars' Conference was small, with a few dozen professors. Attendance doubled in the late 1970s with an influx of primary and secondary school teachers. Since 1990 participation has numbered in the hundreds, and the 29th Annual Conference will bring in another major constituency - the Community Colleges, increasingly important in American higher education. The university, college and community college campuses have become centers of Holocaust awareness.

If the 1967 war paved the way for changed attitudes towards the Holocaust and the formation of a major interfaith conference, the 1973 Yom Kippur War served to shake loose the last reservations held by the American Jewish communities. Initially, the Jewish defense agencies had stood aloof from the Scholars' Conference and intense Holocaust education, counting such work counter-productive to amicable Christian-Jewish relations. But the Yom Kippur War propelled them to a greater readiness to clearly and directly confront the Holocaust and its lessons.

In 1975 community Holocaust Resource Centers were launched - the first by Professor Yaffa Eliach in Brooklyn. Six weeks later the Philadelphia Center was started by Professor Franklin Littell on the campus of Temple University. The growth of local Holocaust Resource Centers has flourished in recent years. Holocaust education is now a

major commitment of Jewish communal education programs, in all major cities. There are now 122 centers in North America.

The Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum have added powerful dimensions to the education of the public.

In spite of large numbers of individual courses on the campuses, programs toward the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees have been slow to emerge. For high quality Ph.D. work in the Holocaust, American students have for years made the trek to study in Hebrew University with the group around Yehuda Bauer and Yisrael Gutman. There was a short spring in 1975 at Temple University, with a doctoral program of which Dr. Mordecai Paldiel - now of Yad Vashem - was the first Ph.D., but it did not outlast its relegation to a section of the Jewish Studies program.

Since the 1970's teacher interest in presenting the Holocaust in the middle and high schools has flourished. The growing interest in America in ethnic and minority studies has helped. So too has the work of Lawrence Kohlberg at Harvard in creating the "moral education and values clarification movement." The major media event during the 1970's was the 1978 television production "Holocaust." It was an antiseptic, soap opera type presentation of genocide, dramatic with love on the run and a happy ending. It received high ratings from the American public if not from the critics. Some specialists found it set their teeth on edge, even though it was useful in exposing millions of viewers to the basic facts of the Holocaust. With all its flaws, it played a major part in opening the door to the public-at-large and in stimulating public support for Holocaust education in the United States.

President Jimmy Carter's interest in memorializing the Holocaust led to the establishing of the President's Commission on the Holocaust. By 1980, through an act of Congress Yom HaShoah became a regular calendar day in America. The President of the United States, the governor of every state and the mayor of every major American City now declares it an official Day of Remembrance.

Documentary films flourished in the 1980s. Among the most notable was Sister Carol Rittner's documentary based on rescuers, "The Courage To Care." Pierre Sauvage's "Weapons of the Spirit" told the story of the Trocmés and Le Chambon, the latter the village of rescuers where he had been an infant. Claude Lanzmann's nine and one-half hour "SHOAH" was widely viewed in America, and is still used in schools.

In the 1990s Schindler's List, Jon Blair's Academy Award-winning Anne Frank Remembered, and Gerda Klein's All But My Life have brought major attention to the Holocaust. As we prepare to enter a

new millennium a new genre of film is appearing on the scene, beginning with Roberto Benigni's remarkable, sensitive "Life is Beautiful."

Monuments, memorials and Holocaust centers continue to abound. The Holocaust Centers provide varied services, including museums, resource centers, archival facilities, family memorials, research facilities, libraries and depositories of oral and video testimony.

Numerous states have established Commissions on the Holocaust and recommendations to teach. Five states have mandated Holocaust Education in the schools<sup>1</sup>. More have vigorously recommended that teachers deal with the subject<sup>2</sup>. There are estimated to be several hundred courses at the college and university level, although no recent or precise study of them throughout the entire USA has been conducted. Dr. Margaret Crouch's study, which covered "The Holocaust in Undergraduate Education in the Middle Atlantic Region,"<sup>3</sup> discovered a continuing growth of course offerings in the region.

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum presents the story for all Americans of conscience – Jew and non-Jew, young or old. The opening of the Museum encouraged public discussion of the Holocaust. It has been responsible for an avalanche of events, one-time conferences and new courses on the campuses, with a rush to include Holocaust Education in the secondary and college curricula.

We now have a dual set of problems to deal with, one on the secondary school level and another at the college and university level.

At both levels of instruction we lack properly trained master teachers and professors. This problem now has become acute in the secondary school arena, where more and more states are mandating or recommending the teaching.

In both cases there is a funding problem. Still lacking are the endowments to create interfaith chairs of Holocaust studies in the universities. Currently there are chairs in the U.S. at the University of California: Los Angeles, at Santa Cruz, Yeshiva University, Emory, Clark, Florida Atlantic University, and at the Richard Stockton College

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<sup>1</sup> The States mandating Holocaust Studies are California (grades 7-9 & 10-12), Florida, Illinois, New Jersey (grades k-12), New York.

<sup>2</sup> The states recommending Holocaust instruction are Connecticut, Indiana, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington. Beginning in September of 1997, Wisconsin has recommended Holocaust Education in secondary schools.

<sup>3</sup> Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation at Wilmington College; Dr. Crouch's address is 604 Norman's Lane, Newark DE 19711.



of New Jersey. The first endowed chairs in a community colleges have been announced, at Monroe Community College, Rochester NY. and Brookdale Community College (New Jersey). Only at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey however, is there a deliberate effort to assure that the study and the teaching remains truly interfaith. The endowed chair for a Visiting Distinguished Scholar rotates between a Christian and a Jewish Scholar year by year.

A problem of recent years in the United States has been a marked tendency to place Holocaust Studies, and now the new chairs, in Departments of Jewish Studies. This insulates the topic from having any general impact.

Training teachers at the secondary and primary school level points up an additional set of problems. Grass roots support is important, as is individual teacher initiative. However, we have passed the point in the development of Holocaust Education where the training of teachers can any longer be delegated to the "ad hoc" method - occasional in-service workshops, voluntary summer institutes or faculty development seminars.

In order to achieve sustainability and quality control in the curriculum and meet the needs of a pluralistic society, we need degree programs for teachers within colleges and universities. These programs must be closely linked - on an interdisciplinary basis - with content departments. Teachers need to receive college credit - with concrete consequences in salary increments - for their advanced work in Holocaust Studies. In order to accomplish this, a top level commitment is required with appropriate funds for resources and graduate training for teachers.

With the emphasis in some K-12 programs on diversity, tolerance, and prejudice reduction we must be very clear about the goals and objectives of Holocaust Education. One of the problems is that presently we have so many curricula that teachers find it difficult to know what and how to select units to use in their classrooms. Sometimes the factual information is not dependable. We need active cooperation between the historians and the professors of methodology to achieve a better integration of pedagogical and content expertise. In the United States, however, we have a decentralized educational system that leaves requirements to the individual states. There is no one standard, no national curriculum for the Holocaust. This leaves Holocaust Education vulnerable to parochial interests.

On the university level we now face the danger of premature Closure, of an administrative solution that slides Holocaust Studies into

Jewish Studies, rather than maintaining it as a discrete field or an interdisciplinary program. This is as dangerous as the widespread indifference or denial of earlier years. In fact Franklin Littell refers to this administrative solution as "soft" denial. Merging Holocaust Studies into Jewish Studies is the wrong approach. It simply sends the wrong message. That the Holocaust is the most traumatic event in the death and life of the Jewish people since the destruction of the Second Temple goes without saying. But study of the Holocaust is also to study the pathology of Western civilization and its flawed structures. It must not be hidden away by false bracketing of courses.

For university administrators, attuned to public opinion, the solution of subsuming "Holocaust" under Jewish Studies is attractive. It keeps the subject under control. In the several disciplines, we academics all face the same temptation to render antiseptic the story and lessons of the Holocaust. Sociologists are tempted to put the message in the box of "racism." Political Scientists are tempted to put the message in the box of "war and dictatorship." Psychologists find it congenial to talk about the special cases of survivors and perpetrators. Theologians find the Holocaust a neat illustration of the Problem of Evil: "theodicy." Sectarians - both Jew and gentile - pigeon-hole it as "a Jewish affair."

Within recent months - and here I shall conclude - major breakthroughs have occurred at Clark University and the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. In the former, with Professor Deborah Dwork taking the lead, a Ph.D. program of study, research and dissertation defense has been initiated. In the latter, a Master of Arts program at Richard Stockton College of New Jersey has been started, primarily to help school teachers. Among the more than fifty who applied for admission to the program there are a few who expect to go on for the Ph.D. The large majority, however, are teachers of various subjects who under the New Jersey mandate are directed to teach a topic on which they need help in building lessons, locating videos and books, and in attaining a general competence in the subject.

These school teachers, flocking to a degree program in Holocaust studies at Stockton College, remind us that the dialogue with the past is alive. And we are reminded that, above all else, we must strive to avert premature closure in Holocaust Studies. The big questions are still open, and they are vital to the mind and spirit of every student whatever his or her "major." For some time to come, the Holocaust will require the vigorous attention of minds and consciences for whom history is not the dead past, but rather a part of our present awareness,

and above all a topic where careful study and teaching are an arrow pointing in the direction of a future without genocide.



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## **Knowledge and Remembrance of the Holocaust in Different Countries: Data from American Jewish Committee- Sponsored Surveys**

Break-out Session: Best Practices and Future Projects in Holocaust  
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### INTRODUCTION

Beginning in June 1992, the American Jewish Committee launched a series of public opinion surveys in various countries probing issues related to knowledge and remembrance of the Holocaust. The countries covered in this research effort include the United States (1992; 1994), Great Britain (1993), France (1993), Slovakia (1993), Australia (1994), Germany (1994), Austria (1995), Poland (1995), and Russia (1996). A number of key questions were asked in all of the countries, providing a wealth of comparative data. Other questions explored in detail Holocaust related concerns specific to individual countries.

The tables which follow present the full set of findings from the American Jewish Committee-sponsored surveys. For those engaged in Holocaust education the data are of immediate relevance in that they make clear the base line of knowledge that exists at present. Clearly, much work needs to be done to overcome the knowledge gap that prevails in many countries with regard to the Holocaust, including the United States.

In the year 2,000, the American Jewish Committee will conduct follow up surveys in all of the countries included in the initial effort, plus

others. This follow-up round will make available, for the first time, trend line data on knowledge and remembrance of the Holocaust. The information generated should serve as a valuable yardstick for measuring progress in the area of Holocaust education.

### Questions Asked in Multiple Countries

1. "As far as you know, what does the term 'the Holocaust' refer to?"  
(in percents) (OPEN-ENDED)

Country	Extermination/ murder/ persecution/ treatment of Jews by Hitler/ Nazis/ Germans	Exter- mination murder/ persecution of Jews	Other relevant responses	Others	DK/NA
Germany (1994)	59	23	5	3	10
W.Germans (1994)	59	27	5	3	6
E.Germans (1994)	58	11	4	2	25
France (1993)	35	21	12	12	20
Great Britain (1993)	33	18	5	35	18
Australia (1994)	39	17	17	15	12
United States (1992)	24	30	7	10	28
United States (1994)	24	35	9	12	19
Poland (1995)	3	32	6	11	48
Austria (1995)	10	49	23	2	20
Russia (1996)	3	3	1	2	91

Note: In the French and American surveys, if an incorrect response was given, respondents were told, "To be precise, the Holocaust was the Nazi extermination of Jews during the Second World War." In the Australian survey, all respondents were so informed. In the British survey, multiple answers were allowed.

"Other relevant responses" may include: concentration camps, German death camps, Hitler, Nazis, Germans, World War II, and the 1940s. "Others" may include: death/murder/slaughter, destruction/disaster/tragedy, war/nuclear war, cataclysm, the end of the world, starvation, or other answers.

The low figures in Poland and Russia for correct/partially correct responses reflect lack of usage of the English term "the Holocaust."

## 2. "From what you know or have heard, what were Auschwitz, Dachau, and Treblinka?" (in percents)

Country	Concentration camps	Other responses	DK/NA
Germany (1994)	92	3	5
W.Germans (1994)	91	4	5
E. Germans (1994)	95	3	2
France (1993)	90	4	6
Great Britain (1993)	76	4	20
Australia (1994)	85	4	13
United States (1992)	62	11	27
United States (1994)	67	4	28
Poland (1995)	91	8	1
Austria (1995)	91	4	6
Russia (1996)	50	2	49

Note: This question was closed-ended in the French, Australian, and American surveys, and open-ended with codes in the British, German, Polish, Austrian, and Russian surveys. Australian respondents were not given the option of answering "other."

## 3. "Approximately how many Jews were killed in the Holocaust?" (in percents)

Country	25, 000	100, 000	1 mil- lion	2 mil- lion	6 mil- lion	20 mil- lion	DK/ NA
Germany (1994)	2	5	13	15	36	8	21
W. Germans (1994)	1	5	12	14	36	9	23
E. Germans (1994)	3	5	16	19	36	6	16
France (1993)	2	4	11	14	45	12	12
Great Britain (1993)	2	4	5	9	41	13	26
Australia (1994)	2	9	12	10	47	6	14
United States (1992)	1	4	7	13	35	10	30
United States (1994)	1	5	6	9	44	7	28
Poland (1995)*	1	2	10	25	34	6	22
Austria (1995)	1	3	12	19	31	8	26
Russia (1996)*	1	2	8	12	21	5	52

\* Respondents in Poland were asked, "Approximately how many Jews were killed by the Nazis during the Second World War?" Respondents in Russia were asked, "Approximately how many Jews in all of Europe were killed by the Nazis during the Second World War?"

4. "Many Jews in Europe were forced to wear a symbol on their clothes during the Second World War. What was it?" (in percents)

Country	Yellow star/ Jewish star*/ star of David*	Other responses	DK/NA
Germany (1994)**	91	1	8
W. Germans (1994)	90	1	9
E. Germans (1994)	98	1	1
France (1993)	88	9	3
Great Britain (1993)	56	9	34
Australia (1994)	72	17	12
United States (1992)	42	30	29
United States (1994)	42	24	33
Poland (1995)	74	8	18
Austria (1995)	84	1	17
Russia (1996)	34	7	59

Note: This question was closed-ended in the French, Australian, and American surveys, and open-ended with codes in the British, German, Polish, Austrian, and Russian surveys.

\* This response was not included in the Australian, French, and American questionnaires.

\*\* In Germany, Poland, Russia, and Austria, "yellow star," "Jewish star," and "star of David" were accepted as responses.

5. "In addition to the Jews, which of the following groups, if any, were persecuted by the Nazis?" (in percents)

Country	Gypsies	Poles	Homo- sexuals	Aryans	Other	DK/NA
Germany (1994)	74	43	68	7	24	14
W. Ger. (1994)	75	40	66	6	21	15
E. Ger. (1994)	70	55	78	8	37	8
France (1993)	57	52	33	8	4	7
Great Britain (1993)	51	63	51	9	14	20
Australia (1994)	49	75	47	9	--	--
United States (1992)	26	50	25	7	10	30
United States (1994)	27	47	26	4	9	34
Austria (1995)	75	41	61	5	14	17



Note: Australian respondents were not given the option of answering "other," and they were asked to answer "yes" or "no" for each response; respondents from the other countries were asked to specify their responses from the list.

6. "Some people claim that the Nazi extermination of the Jews never happened. Have you ever heard this claim, or not?" (in percents)

Country	Heard this claim	Have not heard this claim	DK/NA
Germany(1994)	60	30	9
W. Germans(1994)	62	29	9
E. Germans(1994)	56	34	10
France(1993)	67	33	0
Great Britain(1993)	50	46	4
Australia (1994)	70	28	3
United States(1992)	38	54	8
United States(1994)	49	44	7
Poland (1995)	29	70	2
Austria (1995)	59	21	20
Russia (1996)	13	81	6

7a. "Does it seem possible or does it seem impossible to you that the Nazi extermination of the Jews never happened?" (in percents)

Country	It seems possible	It seems impossible	DK/NA
Germany (1994)	8	80	13
West Germans (1994)	7	79	14
East Germans (1994)	10	82	8
France (1993)	5	94	1
Great Britain (1993)	7	84	9

- 7b. "Does it seem possible to you that the Nazi extermination of the Jews never happened, or do you feel certain that it happened?" (in percents)

Country	It seems possible it never happened	Feel certain it happened	DK/NA
United States (1994)	1	91	8
Australia (1994)	4	93	3
Poland (1995)	1	96	2
Austria (1995)	7	88	6
Russia (1996)	2	90	8

Note: In Australia, the question was asked of a half-sample.

8. "Please tell me whether you strongly agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or strongly disagree: "The Holocaust is not relevant today because it happened almost 50 years ago." (in percents)

Country	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	DK/NA
Germany (1994)	11	26	33	20	10
W. Germans (1994)	12	28	32	17	10
E. Germans (1994)	5	17	37	31	11
France (1993)	8	12	15	64	1
Great Britain (1993)	5	13	20	53	9
Australia (1994)	7	9	23	57	4
United States (1992)	8	13	17	46	15
United States (1994)	8	13	17	48	14
Poland (1995)*	6	22	43	25	4
Austria (1995)	10	18	26	29	18

\*Respondents in Poland were asked about "the Nazi extermination of the Jews."

9. "In your view, how important is it for Germans [for the French/for the British/for Australians/for all Americans/for all Austrians/for all citizens of Russia] to know about and understand the Holocaust--is it essential, very important, only somewhat important, or not important?" (in percents)

Country	Only Very Essential	somewhat important	Not important	important	DK/ NA
Germany (1994)	18	50	19	7	7
W. Germans (1994)	17	48	20	7	8
E. Germans (1994)	20	55	14	6	5
France(1993)	45	43	11	1	0
Great Britain (1993)	33	39	20	4	4
Australia (1994)	29	43	23	3	2
United States (1992)	33	39	13	2	13
United States (1994)	39	37	12	2	11
Poland (1995)*	17	69	11	1	3
Austria (1995)	20	42	17	5	16
Russia (1996)*	31	31	22	8	8

\*Respondents in Poland and Russia were asked about "the Nazi extermination of the Jews during the Second World War."

10. "Please tell me whether you strongly agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or strongly disagree: `The Holocaust makes clear the need for the State of Israel as a place of refuge for Jews in times of persecution.'" (in percents)

Country	Strongly agree	Mostly agree	Mostly disagree	Strongly disagree	DK/NA
France (1993)	19	32	19	23	7
Great Britain (1993)	24	33	14	6	23
Australia (1994)	17	42	17	10	15
United States (1992)	28	32	8	5	27
United States (1994)	25	33	11	6	25

11a. "For each of the following, please tell me if you think it is a lesson to be learned from the Holocaust or not: (a) Firm steps need to be taken to protect the rights of minorities." (in percents)

Country	Is	Is not	DK/NA
France (1993)	87	10	3
Great Britain (1993)	89	3	8
United States (1992)	83	6	11
United States (1994)	76	13	10

11b. "For each of the following, please tell me if you think it is a lesson to be learned from the Holocaust or not: (b) There is no hope for the human race." (in percents)

Country	Is	Is not	DK/NA
France (1993)	38	57	5
Great Britain (1993)	34	51	15
United States (1992)	21	67	13
United States (1994)	18	73	9

11c. "For each of the following, please tell me if you think it is a lesson to be learned from the Holocaust or not: (c) People must speak out against oppression so that another Holocaust will not happen." (in percents)

Country	Is	Is not	DK/NA
France (1993)	92	6	2
Great Britain (1993)	92	2	6
United States (1992)	84	4	12
United States (1994)	81	9	10

11d. "For each of the following, please tell me if you think it is a lesson to be learned from the Holocaust or not: (d) In relations between people and countries, what counts is power and not morality." (in percents)

Country	Is	Is not	DK/NA
France (1993)	57	35	8
Great Britain (1993)	29	48	23
United States (1992)	29	55	16
United States (1994)	22	66	13

11e. "For each of the following, please tell me if you think it is a lesson to be learned from the Holocaust or not: (e) It is important to stand by what you think is right instead of going along with everyone else." (in percents)

Country	Is	Is not	DK/NA
France (1993)	76	18	6
Great Britain (1993)	94	1	5
United States (1992)	85	4	11
United States (1994)	84	7	9

12. "In your view, how likely is it that the Jewish people could be subject to another Holocaust somewhere in the world in coming years - - very likely, somewhat likely, or not very likely?" (in percents)

Country	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not very likely	DK/NA
France (1993)	7	31	59	3
Great Britain (1993)	16	31	40	13
Australia (1994)	15	34	48	4
United States (1992)	13	28	43	17
United States (1994)	13	29	41	17

13. "Are there any situations similar in nature to the Holocaust going on in the world today?" (in percents)

Country	Yes	No	DK/NA
France (1993)	86	10	4
Great Britain (1993)	77	9	14
Australia (1994)	77	16	7
United States (1992)	47	26	27
United States (1994)	52	25	23

- 14a. "Some people say that 45 years [50 years] after the end of World War II, it is time to put the memory of the Holocaust, Hitler's extermination of the Jews, behind us. Others say that we should keep the remembrance of the Holocaust strong even after the passage of time. Which opinion comes closer to your opinion?" (in percents)

Country	Behind	Remember	DK/NA
Hungary (1991)	28	61	10
Czechoslovakia (1991)	21	71	9
Poland (1991)	13	81	6
Poland (1995)	10	85	5
Russia (1996)	6	78	16

- 14b. "With the opening of a new chapter in German history, 45 years after the end of the Second World War, it is time to put the memory of the Holocaust behind us." (in percents)

Country	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	DK/NA
Germany (1990) <sup>30</sup>	28	20	14	8	
W. Ger (1990)	34	31	18	9	8
E. Ger (1990)	21	23	26	21	9

14c. "Recently someone said: "Today, in the aftermath of German unification, we should not talk so much about the Holocaust, but should rather draw a line under the past." Would you say this is correct or incorrect?" (in percents)

Country	Correct	Incorrect	DK/NA
Germany (1994)	52	34	14
West Germans (1994)	56	29	15
East Germans (1994)	36	54	10

14d. "Now, 45 years [50 years] after the end of the Second World War, it is time to put the memory of the Holocaust behind us." (in percents)

Country	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	DK/NA
Austria (1991)	34	19	15	13	20
Austria (1995)	13	20	26	24	16

14e. "Some people say that 48 years after the end of World War II, it is time to put the memory of the Holocaust, the deportations and extermination of Jews, behind us. Others say that we should preserve these remembrances. Which opinion comes closer to your attitude?" (in percents)

Country	To stop remembering deportations and extermination of Jews	To preserve the remembrance	DK/NA
Slovakia (1993)	38	42	20

15. "Jews are exploiting the National Socialist Holocaust for their own purposes." (in percents)

Country	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	DK/NA
Germany (1990)	11	28	27	15	20
W. Ger (1990)	13	32	25	11	19
E. Ger (1990)	4	16	34	21	25
Germany (1994)	15	24	27	14	20
W. Ger (1994)	18	26	25	13	18
E. Ger (1994)	4	15	36	20	24
Austria (1991)	13	19	21	15	32
Austria (1995)	8	20	24	20	28

16a. "What is your opinion about `revisionist' statements which assert that there was no such thing as gas chambers and the Nazi extermination of the Jews? (a) We must forbid these statements and penalize those who spread them. (b) We must allow these statements and writings to be freely expressed." (in percents)

Country	Forbid	Allow	DK/NA
France (1993)	54	43	3

16b. "If people say that there were no such things as gas chambers and Nazi extermination camps, do you think we should forbid these statements and penalize those who spread them or allow these statements and writings to be freely expressed?" (in percents)

Country	Forbid	Allow	DK/NA
Australia (1994)	12	81	7



17. "From which of these sources, if any, have you learned about the Holocaust?"\* (MULTIPLE ANSWERS ALLOWED) (in percents)

Response	Poland 1995	Australia 1994	United States 1994	United States 1992
Books	75	68	43	42
Television	-	82	58	50
The movies-	-	62	33	24
Newspaper and magazine articles	-	73	35	31
Mass media: TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, movies	92	-	-	-
School	67	44	48	37
Churches/synagogues	-	9	15	10
Church	29	-	-	-
People I know	-	43	26	20
Your own experience, that of a family member, or people you know	47	-	-	-
Other (SPECIFY)	-	-	4	5
This is the first I've heard of the Holocaust	1	1	4	6
DK/NA	-	-	4	5

Note: Australian and Polish respondents were asked to answer "yes" or "no" for each response; American respondents were asked to specify their responses from the list.

\*In Poland, respondents were asked where they had heard of "the Nazi extermination of the Jews."

## 18. "Who was the leader of Nazi Germany?" (in percents)

Response	Australia 1994	United States 1994	United States 1992
Joseph Stalin	1	1	2
Adolf Hitler	96	89	87
Hirohito	1	0	1
Winston Churchill	0	0	0
DK/NA	3	10	10

**Questions Asked in Individual Countries***Germany (1990)*

1. "Do you think that the German government should, after the unification of the two German states, teach about the Nazi period in history lessons in the schools?" (in percents)

Country	Yes	No	DK/NA
Germany (1990)	73	16	11
West Germans (1990)	69	20	12
East Germans (1990)	84	7	9

2. "Do you think that the German government should, after the unification of the two German states, prosecute Nazi war criminals?" (in percents)

Country	Yes	No	DK/NA
Germany (1990)	55	36	9
West Germans (1990)	48	43	10
East Germans (1990)	74	20	6

3. "Do you think that the German government should, after the unification of the two German states, pay reparations to Jews?" (in percents)

Country	Yes	No	DK/NA
Germany (1990)	22	66	12
West Germans (1990)	15	75	11
East Germans (1990)	40	44	16

***Germany (1994)***

1. "A proposal has been put forward to establish a national Holocaust memorial museum in Germany. Do you approve or disapprove of this idea?" (in percents)

Country	Approve	Disapprove	DK/NA
Germany (1994)	37	37	26
West Germans (1994)	33	42	25
East Germans (1994)	52	20	28

***Soviet Union (1990)***

1. "Have you heard or not heard about the mass extermination of Jews during the Second World War?" (in percents)

Country	Yes, I have	No, I haven't
Soviet Union (1990)	89	11

2. "How many Jews do you think were exterminated by the Nazis in those years?" (OPEN-ENDED) (in percents)

Response	Percent
1,000,000 or less	10
1-3,000,000 (including 3)	7
3-4,000,000 (including 4)	1
4-5,000,000 (including 5)	2
6,000,000 (or about)	2
7-8,000,000 (including 7 or 8)	1
8-10,000,000 (including 10)	1
greater than 10,000,000	0
no response	73

***Commonwealth of Independent States (1992)***

1. "Do you think history classes should talk about the mass extermination of Jews during WWII?" (in percents)

Country	They should	They shouldn't	Difficult to say
Russia (1992)	66	15	19
Ukraine (1992)	78	8	14
Belarus (1992)	60	24	16
Estonia (1992)	78	9	13
Latvia (1992)	75	6	22
Lithuania (1992)	69	15	16
Moldova (1992)	88	5	7
Azerbaijan (1992)	38	30	32
Kazakhstan (1992)	65	10	25
Uzbekistan (1992)	51	25	24

*Austria (1991, 1995)*

1. "With which of the following statements do you agree? 'We Austrians, too, lost the war in 1945.' 'We Austrians were liberated by the Allies in 1945.'" (in percents)

Country	Lost	Liberated	DK/NA
Austria (1991)	48	43	10
Austria (1995)	42	49	9

2. "Was Austria in 1938 the first victim of Hitler's Germany or also responsible, as a participant, for the events up to 1945?" (in percents)

Country	Victim	Responsible	DK/NA
Austria (1991)	34	39	33
Austria (1995)	28	29	43

3. "It is often asserted that Austrians must especially stick up for the Jews, because Austrians participated in the crimes against the Jews during the Hitler era." (in percents)

Country	Agree	Agree partly	Undecided	Disagree	DK/NA
Austria (1991)	4	19	30	41	6
Austria (1995)	5	28	33	31	3

4. "Do you think that the Austrian government should prosecute Nazi war criminals?" (in percents)

Country	Yes	No	DK/NA
Austria (1991)	38	56	7

*United States (1992 and 1994)*

1. "In which country did the Nazis first come to power?" (in percents)

Response	United States 1994	United States 1992
Belgium	1	1
France	1	1
Germany	81	78
Russia	2	3
Other (SPECIFY)	1	1
DK/NA	14	16

2. "Where did you hear this?" (MULTIPLE ANSWERS ALLOWED)  
(in percents of respondents who have heard the claim that the Nazi extermination of the Jews never happened)

Response	United States 1994	United States 1992
Books	9	14
Television	71	59
The movies	5	5
Newspaper and magazine articles	35	37
School	6	4
Churches/synagogues	2	2
People I know	15	14
From neo-Nazi groups	10	12
Other (SPECIFY)	1	4
DK/NA	4	5

*Slovakia (1993)*

1. "The atrocities committed against Jews during World War II must be condemned." (in percents)

Country	I absolutely agree	I rather agree	I rather disagree	I absolutely disagree	DK/NA
Slovakia (1993)	71	20	2	1	6

2. "Slovak political representatives also take their share of responsibility for the extermination of the Jews." (in percents)

Country	I absolutely agree	I rather agree	I rather disagree	I absolutely disagree	DK/NA
Slovakia (1993)	19	28	14	8	32

3. "President Tiso saved the lives of thousands of Jews and the Jewish people should therefore be grateful to him." (in percents)

Country	I absolutely agree	I rather agree	I rather disagree	I absolutely disagree	DK/NA
Slovakia (1993)	8	16	17	16	43

4. "What do you think of the sharing of responsibility and guilt of the ordinary Slovak population for the fate of the Jews?" (in percents)

Response	Percent
Everybody was trying to save the Jews to the best of their possibilities; nothing more could have been done	35
More could have been done to save the Jews	26
Don't know	39

***France (1993)***

1. "Would you say that the French state led by Marshal Pétain between 1940 and 1944 was responsible for the deportation of Jews to the extermination camps, or not responsible?" (in percents)

Country	Yes, it was responsible	No, it was not responsible	DK/NA
France (1993)	57	29	14

2. "In your view, is the remembrance of the Holocaust necessary so that it doesn't happen again, or dangerous because it risks a revival of anti-Semitism?" (in percents)

Country	Necessary	Dangerous	DK/NA
France (1993)	74	23	3



***Australia (1994)***

1. "And in your view how likely is it that any other people could be subject to an event similar to the Holocaust somewhere in the world in coming years? Would you say it was ...? (in percents)

Country	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not very likely	Not likely at all	DK/NA
Australia (1994)	41	40	13	4	2

2. "Do you think that the topic of the Holocaust is sufficiently important to warrant it being taught as a special subject in Australian secondary schools?" (in percents)

Country	Yes	No	DK/NA
Australia (1994)	41	55	4

***Poland (1995)***

1. "In your view, who was the main victim of the Nazis during the Second World War?" (OPEN-ENDED) (in percents)

Response	Percent
Poles/Poland	26
Jews	28
Poles/Poland and Jews	28
Russians/Russia	1
Europeans/several nations	2
Everyone/every country suffered about the same	5
Other	7
Don't know	3

2. "What percent of Poland's population before the Second World War was Jewish?" (in percents)

Response	Percent
Less than 2 percent	1
2-9 percent	10
10-19 percent	26
20-29 percent	29
30-49 percent	17
50+ percent	3
Don't know	15

Note: Historians agree that Jews constituted 10 percent of Poland's population prior to the Second World War.

3. "What happened to most Polish Jews during the Second World War?" (OPEN-ENDED) (in percents)

Response	Percent
Killed	77
Emigrated	3
Some were killed, some emigrated	13
Survived	1
Other	4
Don't know	2

4. "Which group suffered more from Nazi persecution during the Second World War: Poles or Jews?" (in percents)

Response	Percent
Poles	28
Jews	29
Both groups suffered about the same (volunteered)	40
Other responses (volunteered)	1
Don't know	3

5. "What percent of Polish Jews were killed by the Nazis during the Second World War?" (in percents)

Response	Percent
Less than 10 percent	3
10-49 percent	31
50-79 percent	38
80+ percent	13
Don't know	15

6. "There are now many fewer Jews in Poland than there were before the Second World War. Is this good for the country, bad for the country, or neither?" (in percents)

Response	Percent
Good	35
Bad	5
Neither	51
Other	1
Don't know	8

7. "Were there any Poles who participated in rescuing Jews during the Second World War, or not?" (in percents)

Response	Percent
There were many such Poles	67
There were few such Poles	28
There were no such Poles	0
Don't know	5

8. "Were there any Poles who participated in the persecution of Jews during the Second World War, or not?" (in percents)

Response	Percent
There were many such Poles	11
There were few such Poles	62
There were no such Poles	14
Don't know	13

9. "Did Poles do enough to help Jews during the Second World War, or not?" (in percents)

Response	Percent
Did enough	49
Did not do enough	15
Did as much as they could under the circumstances (volunteered)	26
Other (volunteered)	1
Don't know	8

#### ADDENDUM

The data appearing in this document are taken from the following American Jewish Committee-sponsored surveys:

Bashkirova, Elena. *Current Russian Attitudes Toward Jews and the Holocaust*. New York: American Jewish Committee, 1996.

Bútorová, Zora, and Martin Bútor. *Attitudes Toward Jews and the Holocaust in Independent Slovakia*. New York: American Jewish Committee, 1995.

Cohen, Renae, and Jennifer L. Golub. *Attitudes Toward Jews in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia: A Comparative Survey*. New York: American Jewish Committee, 1991.

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- Golub, Jennifer, and Renae Cohen. *Knowledge and Remembrance of the Holocaust in Poland*. New York: American Jewish Committee, 1995.
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UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ECONOMIC, BUSINESS AND  
AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES

## **Report of the Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research**

### Plenary Session: Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research

At the initiative of Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson, the Swedish, UK and U.S. governments, together with experts from our countries, gathered in Stockholm last May to launch an unprecedented international initiative -- the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. Our countries and many others -- Germany among the first and most consistent-- have engaged in Holocaust education efforts at home for many years. But for the first time, heads of government agreed to cooperate directly with other countries, through diplomatic and other channels, to strengthen Holocaust education efforts on both sides of the Atlantic and beyond. On September 25, Israel and Germany joined the Task Force, and have since contributed very substantially to its work.

On behalf of the Task Force, I would like to give special recognition to the Prime Minister of Sweden, Goran Persson, for developing and giving life to the idea of international, intergovernmental cooperation to promote Holocaust education. I would also like to commend Professor Yehuda Bauer of Yad Vashem, one of the great Holocaust scholars and educators in the world, for his intellectual guidance as Personal Advisor to the Task Force.

As Prime Minister Persson said so eloquently in May, and as did so many speakers at the remarkable half-day breakout session held at the Museum yesterday, Holocaust education and remembrance can help ensure that the crimes of the Holocaust are never forgotten nor repeated. As this century comes to a close and we enter the new millennium, our

international cooperation can encourage and reinforce work in many nations to strengthen Holocaust education efforts, to create new ones and to finally begin such efforts where they have been overlooked.

During the U.S. tenure as Task Force Chairman, we have built on Sweden's excellent work in focusing the initiative on a number of priority areas agreed to at the May 7 meeting in Stockholm. These projects, some of which are works in progress to be completed in the first half of next year, are highlighted in the Report that the Task Force is presenting to the Washington Conference.

Let me now summarize very briefly the projects that the Task Force has undertaken to date.

First, an effort is underway to assemble a directory of organizations engaged in Holocaust education and remembrance and a survey of current efforts in the field of Holocaust education worldwide. We expect that the directory, itself a gold mine of information, will become the basis of a much more comprehensive survey of such efforts that can be helpful to countries seeking advice and assistance as they consider ways to improve their own efforts. Sweden has also just completed a series of videotapes for use in their school system.

Second, as part of a domestic initiative, Sweden produced a book on the Holocaust that was made available to every family with high school children. At the request of the Task Force, the book's authors have created an insert demonstrating how an international version and individual national versions of the book can be prepared, should other countries wish to draw on it as part of their own Holocaust education efforts.

Third, the Chief Historians of the U.S. Department of State and the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office will produce a guide to finding and using Holocaust-related archives with the intention that it be employed as a tool by researchers and educators. Making these archives more accessible is a key Task Force goal. Contained in the Task Force Report is a brief proposal as to how activities in this area should proceed over the next year. We highlight in particular a website which is becoming a nexus of information for research in virtually every dimension of the Holocaust-era assets issues discussed at the London and Washington Conferences.

Fourth, in close consultation with Yad Vashem and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the UK has led the development of a set of internationally applicable guidelines, or best practices, for use in teaching about the Holocaust. The guidelines are intended to serve as a starting point to facilitate the work of educators both in places where



programs exist and in those where they are yet to be developed. They are based on the experiences -- both positive and negative -- of two generations of Holocaust educators.

Fifth, the Task Force has considered and accepted a British proposal to encourage each of our nations to designate a Day of Remembrance for Holocaust victims. In Israel and in the U.S., Yom HaShoa serves this purpose. In Germany, January 27, the day of the liberation of Auschwitz, is recognized. We hope other nations will designate their own Day of Remembrance as well. These acts of remembrance will reinforce awareness of the events of the Holocaust and reach a large audience, while demonstrating solidarity in the fight against anti-Semitism, racism, prejudice, persecution, and hatred.

In addition to these projects, the Task Force has made commitments in the form of two declarations: one concerning archival openness and the other the promotion of Holocaust education efforts. We invite all Washington Conference governments to join us in endorsing these goals.

The Task Force Declaration on the opening of Holocaust-relevant archives presents as our aim the opening of "all public and private archives bearing on the Holocaust and the fate of Nazi-confiscated assets by December 31, 1999." We call on all that possess such material to open it to as many researchers as possible on an urgent basis and commit ourselves as governments to do everything possible to ensure that this important target is met.

The second declaration and final element of the Task Force Report to the Conference emphasizes our common conviction that urgent international attention be paid to Holocaust education, remembrance and research to reinforce and spread the historic meaning and enduring lessons of that tragic event. In the declaration we commit our governments to "reinforce Holocaust education, remembrance and research in our own countries, with a special focus on our own countries' histories." We also pledge to strengthen existing programs or launch new ones, and encourage other countries to do likewise.

We have pledged our governments' commitment to this endeavor, and to our diplomatic cooperation to advance its objectives, principally to ensure that the lessons of the Holocaust are not forgotten and its horrors never repeated. We have full confidence that when the U.S. chairmanship concludes at the end of the month, the UK will serve the Task Force admirably in the role of Chairman. We furthermore hope that Conference participants will find the report of the Task Force a

valuable and useful contribution to the cause of Holocaust education, remembrance and research.

Most important, whether by working with us through the Task Force or through other mechanisms, we hope that all countries represented at the Washington Conference will choose to embrace our goals and strengthen their Holocaust education and remembrance efforts. We are delighted that France and the Netherlands have just indicated their interest in joining. Because our effort is an inclusive one, we also urge other countries to consider working directly with us in the Task Force. Nothing could be more important than to honor the many victims and to prevent such tragedies in the future. Thank you.