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Memory: Blessing, Burden, or Curse?

The Shoah as a Burning Memory

Alice L. Eckardt

Memory is clearly one of the most precious of our faculties and one of the most essential elements of the human mind. Memory makes learning possible and forms the foundation from which new insights and creations spring, often without our awareness of the particular memory that triggers the new idea or form.

Memory enables us to know who we are; it is at the core of our identity. The person with amnesia is a lost soul beset by an almost intolerable sense of lostness and solitariness. Yet amnesia can sometimes be a consequence of wanting to forget something that appears so frightening or overwhelming that it seems to threaten the person's existence. Most psychologically-triggered eclipsing of one's past is usually less total than amnesia; such persons normally "forget" only selective events or moments. (Amnestia) -- the deliberate overlooking of a happening or a person -- is quite different, and will be considered further on.)

Memory is both embedded in time and yet is timeless -- free of the constraints of a today or yesterday. It enables us to relive times of happiness and elation, just as it also reminds us of times of sadness and despair -- sometimes with the same sharpness as at the original time. It can evoke laughter and tears, smiles and shudders. With memory we have the means to

preserve and recall the sights and sounds that give us aesthetic enjoyment, spiritual uplift, courage, and hope. It can also provide the recognition of dangers.

Collective memory produces ties that bind families, communities, ethnic groups, and nations in some semblance of unity. It perpetuates (if we allow it to do so) the moral reserves on which we need to call in times of difficult decisions and choices. By memorializing a person we help to keep alive the wisdom, courage, and spirit of that person. By memorializing an event (through religious services, community gatherings, or national rituals) we commemorate both the original happening with all of its significance and also those who were participants. Through these ceremonies and liturgies a shared memory is preserved and passed on. That memory can act to inspire constancy to the shared values, courage to struggle against the remembered tragedies reoccurring, and gratitude for the benefits that may have resulted from the event or the struggle it involved. Of course a shared memory can be a false memory, and then the values inculcated may be equally fallacious, or even dangerous.

Every religious community and every nation has its store of memory, which provides most of its coherence. Yet the way in which any particular memory is selected from a multitude of possible alternative memories, and the way in which it is kept alive is not necessarily beneficial to either the community or to others who are looked at as outsiders. Here the ethical factor

can be all-decisive. A nation that recalls only its "glorious" (e.g., imperial) past will be inclined to seek a recovery of that status, regardless of the impact on other nations and peoples on which such a stature will be built. Or a nation that recalls only what it feels was its unjust treatment may seek vengeance and/or an alteration of the condition in which it finds itself "trapped" by means that will cause renewed havoc.¹ A religious community that remembers only its rapid gain of converts and geographic extension (despite the methods used) may be tempted to repeat those policies that brought in new members regardless of what damage (moral or otherwise) this may cause to the sought-after converts or to the believers themselves. Or the remembrance of actions taken against, or believed to have been taken against, a religious community's most significant figures or institutions can lead to the creation of a theology of negation of those held guilty, even extending to their descendants many generations hence. Ethnic or nationalistic groups may seek their own glorification or aggrandizement at the expense of other communities or nations.

Memory can also be devastating in other ways. A memory that is absolutely horrible or terrifying may so overwhelm a person that immobility is the only possible response. It may drive one to such an effort to repress the horror that no energy is left for living any kind of normal life. It may assail the person with nightmares that make sleep a frightful ordeal. It may so

master the individual that no escape from or repression of the horror is possible. It may dull all the senses and block all efforts of others to reach the inner core of the person. Or, alternatively, the memory may drive the individual to hyperactivity or over-aggressiveness as a means of overwhelming the fear of the devastation the memory might cause.²

Collective response to memory that can produce feelings of guilt or fears of becoming a victim as others were in the past may well take the form of collective repression, or denial of the facts, or passing the blame on to others -- even on to the victims. In such a situation, the next generation will be raised either in ignorance or self-justification. With any of these responses the possibility of changing the underlying attitudes or situations that helped to produce the shaming or terrifying actions is very small. In fact, the probability of their being perpetuated at a low or below-level of consciousness is fairly high, and the "right" set of circumstances is likely to bring them to the fore again.

The generation that participated in the dreadful events usually is unable or unwilling to acknowledge its own responsibility, guilt, or shame. The biblical account of a people spending forty years in the wilderness comes to mind-- years during which the older generation with its heritage of life spent in captivity died out and a new generation born in freedom with a new vision could arise. Henirich von Trott du Solz, member of a family that opposed everything Hitler stood for, and

whose brother Adam was executed for participating in the July 20th plot to kill Hitler, is convinced of the truth represented by this archetype. In 1984 he noted that those Germans born between 1919 and 1949 wanted to "forget everything"; they "succumbed to the economic miracle," devoting all their energies to building a new existence for themselves and their nation.³

On the other hand, memory and knowledge of the awful, the terrifying, or the shameful, can be a positive force in redeeming the future, even though the past can never be redeemed. It can motivate a community to seek out the origins of the attitudes and actions of which it is now both ashamed and afraid. It can redirect the concerns of a people to encompass those who were heretofore excluded from or thought unworthy of concern. Memory may awaken people to the damning aspects of its cultural heritage, its historical behavior, its philosophical or psychological assumptions, its theological claims. Through sensitivity to all of life's unexpectedness and unfulfilled possibilities the community may then seek out alternative traditions that earlier had been set aside, or find new cultural and/or religious principles on which to base its collective life.⁴ By a supreme effort the bitter memories may eventually be counterbalanced (though not erased) by a happier situation.

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Remembering can be positive and it can be negative, depending on what we choose to remember and how we use the memory.

Adolf Hitler's personal memory of November 9, 1918, the date on which the agreement was made to end World War I, could only have been of the hospital in which he was recovering from poison gas, and the shock of learning that Germany had agreed to cease fighting. He did not know (nor did most Germans still at the front) that by the end of September the Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht had concluded that it could not win the war, that it anticipated a total collapse of the western front, and that it had asked the civilian government to request a cease-fire from the Allies (thus sparing itself the onus of capitulation). Nor was Hitler aware of the collapse of Germany's wartime partners--the Central Powers of Austro-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey. All he knew, and all that mattered to him, was that the German soldiers were still occupying French and Belgian territory and continuing to fight. He concluded that there must have been a betrayal of the brave fighting men to produce an armistice that would benefit the Western Powers at the expense of Germany and its partners. Thus, November 9-11, 1918 produced in him an all-consuming passion to reverse the outcome of that war, which he was convinced Germany was capable of winning.

That determination required him to enter the political arena and create conditions under which another war could be fought with Germany the final victor. It also required, in Hitler's distorted view, the "elimination" of those internal enemies of Germany whom he believed had betrayed the nation in 1918 with a "stab in the back" (Dolchstoß)[®] and whom he identified as Jew-

Bolsheviks (an inseparable entity for him).

His first strategic use of the memory of November 9, 1918 was the attempt to seize power in Munich in 1923 on that very date. That failed putsch produced the first "martyrs" for the National Socialist Party, and gave an additional significance to the date, which would be memorialized each year by Party rituals full of religious symbolism^e and Germanic chauvinism.

In 1938 the date was put to a new use -- a time to strike back at the people who had supposedly been the primary betrayers of Germany. In short, Kristallnacht and the entire National Socialist nightmare was ^{at least partially} the result of incorrect and misused memory -- ^a "memory" of 1918 unfortunately shared by most Germans, and of 1923 shared by Party members. (To be sure, Hitler's murderous

act was the consequence of much more than a misunderstanding of Nov. 1918.)

Another misused memory produced the Bitburg scandal in 1985. When President Reagan and Chancellor Kohl memorialized the 50th anniversary of the ending of World War II and celebrated the postwar friendship of the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany, they did so by distorting the memory of the SS who were Hitler's chief minions in his drive to establish the "thousand year Reich," and by suppressing the memory of the evils it perpetrated and the victims it begot. Some of the consequences of that misuse of memory in the Federal Republic of Germany have been ugly.⁷

A survivor writing in 1985 recalled that even while he was at Bergen-Belsen in 1945 a frightening thought flashed through his mind: "Thirty years from now people will say 'that was a

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long time ago.' They will say 'if you cannot forgive, at least forget.' They will say 'you must come to terms with the facts.' They will say 'life must go on.'"⁹

A new memory was created for the 9th of November in 1989 when the hated Berlin Wall was officially breached. As grateful as everyone was for the end of that monstrosity of separation, some sensitive Germans recognized how strong the temptation would be to use this latest memory to blot out those other memories of the date and all the evil they represented. Eberhard Bethge wrote to a friend the following spring, commenting how he had lived through all the four "9th of November" events which "tried to capture the public mind." He now saw the "Bitburg"-danger being recapitulated, with the German people "again trying to turn the date into [a celebration of] glorious German history, with the German anthem being sung in the Bundestag [even] together with Jewish representatives. . . ." Almost a year later Professor Julius H. Schoeps, who was born during his parents' wartime exile in Sweden and who now heads the Institute for German-Jewish History at Duisberg University, judged that for the German people November 9, 1989 was "the end of the postwar era. They give it a symbolic meaning, drawing a final line under the past."¹⁰

The necessary condition for any positive change is an honest recognition of what was wrong in the past, free of any whitewashing or apologetic. This is the foundation for any kind of repentance/teshuvah or turning around. It is much easier for

an individual to make such a turnabout than for a community, for what is required is a converting experience. One must be converted away from one set of convictions and certainties and converted to a new vision with new foundations. A Polish writer, Jan Blonski, insists that even those individuals who were not directly responsible for the actions of the past must carry it within themselves, no matter how unpleasant or painful "We must also strive to expiate it."¹¹ But mass conversions are not common, and educational methods of changing ideas and beliefs are not as effective.

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The years from 1933 to 1939 were a crucial time of testing -- of the German people, the church leadership in Germany, the High Command of the Wehrmacht,¹² the Austrian nation, the strength of will of the French and English governments (who supposedly, with the Soviet Union, held Germany to a balance of power in Europe), and the free world. And the memory and acknowledgement of that testing and failure -- and the exceptional cases of integrity -- are essential as we in the post-Shoah time examine our own ideas, leadership, and institutions.

In 1938 Hitler provided the final tests, which all the major parties failed. That year was the critical turning point, the last moment when the six years of war and devastation might have been prevented, the year when Hitler's plans for territorial expansion reached the apex of success without war, the year when

the measures for the elimination of Jews from German social, and economic life¹³ were completed and the way cleared for a "final solution to the Jewish question." When war came (as Hitler was determined it would), the two goals of geographical expansion and elimination of the "corrupting" enemies coalesced. The conquest of ever-expanding territories brought ever more Jews within the Nazis' grasp, and often provided ready collaborators in Hitler's "war against the Jews." The military combat screened the murderous actions and kept all the opponents of the Third Reich occupied so that they could ignore what was being done to the Jewish population of Europe if they chose to do so, as most did.

And so, as the German people succumbed to Hitler's charisma and tempting promises, they came under the absolute decrees of a totalitarian regime driven by visions of a superior, purified race, and power over a greatly expanded geography. In March 1938 Austria was annexed, after disgraceful Hitlerian highhandedness, yet with much public jubilation on the part of its "Aryan" population. Its 185,000 Jews and 206,000 "Christian Jews" became the immediate target of violence, humiliation, arrest, and expropriation. In July 1938 the international community, represented by 32 national delegations, met at Evian, France to consider the plight of the 540,000 Jews still in Germany and Austria. No country but tiny Guatemala came away from that meeting with honor, least of all the United States, whose president had called for it, nor Great Britain who held control over Palestine where the establishment of the "Jewish National

Home" had been promised not only by the British government in 1917 but also by the Treaty of Versailles, and underwritten by the League of Nations Covenant in 1920. The free nations, singly and collectively, thus signalled Hitler that they would take no actions on behalf of the endangered Jews. Hitler was able to exult triumphantly that no nation wanted the Jews, not just Germany.

At the same time Switzerland stepped up its border patrol to control the number of Jews entering the country without the required visas and sent back numbers of those caught. When Swiss officials requested that the Reich help them to identify Jews among the refugees, the German government recalled all Jewish passports and marked them with a large red J. Further, by the end of the year every Jew in the Reich was required to carry an identification card for official scrutiny on demand. Another part of the identification and humiliation process had already required all Jews to keep or adopt "Jewish" names, adding Israel or Sarah if there was any possibility that the family name might pass as German (decree of January '38).

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When Hitler demanded that portions of Czechoslovakia heavily populated with Germanic peoples be made part of the Greater Reich, and threatened war over the issue, Britain and France chose to ignore their treaties of mutual defense with Czechoslovakia and in effect ceded that country's well-fortified border area to the Third Reich, leaving it virtually defenseless. Jews living in this Sudeten area fled, but soon found themselves

at the mercy of the Nazis the following Spring (1939) when German troops marched in to enforce the incorporation of Bohemia-Moravia into the Reich, and the establishment of Slovakia as an "independent" albeit puppet state.

At the end of October 1938, in response to the Polish government's actions to make Polish Jews living abroad into non-citizens, the Gestapo was directed to forcibly deport as many Polish Jews as possible from German territory. On the frigid night of October 27-28 some 18,000 were rounded up, put on trains, and then forced off at the Polish border without any food or shelter. (Since the Polish government refused to accept them, these hapless persons suffered for some days or weeks before they were grudgingly allowed to enter Poland and find some kind of accomodation in ill-equipped villages.)

Another type of action was taken against the Reich's Jews in June and July 1938. Local officials in three cities most dear to the Nazis (Munich, Nuremberg, and Dortmund) appropriated and demolished the prestigious synagogues located there. Then, utilizing a misguided attack on the third secretary of the German Embassy in Paris by the son of two of the deported Polish Jews, Goebbels sent word to all local Gestapo units giving them free rein to desecrate or destroy all the remaining synagogues (and by extension, prayer rooms) throughout the Greater Reich.¹⁴ (Moreover, within a few days synagogues in the free cities of Danzig and Memel¹⁵ received the same treatment at the hands of local Nazis.) The Torah scrolls (equally sacred scripture for

Christians) were desecrated or consigned to the flames along with other items of religious significance. Thousands of Jewish businesses and living quarters were broken into, sacked, and despoiled. More than a hundred Jews were killed and thousands more were subjected to violence. To top off the pogrom, some 30,000 Jewish males over the age of 16 years were marched off to three of the Nazis' concentrations camps (Buchenwald, Dachau, and Sachsenhausen) that had been enlarged in preparation for the influx. Within a few days 2,500 of these new inmates perished from mistreatment. (Some who were still there in 1941, segregated from other prisoners, were referred to as Kristallnächsters.)

But that was not the end of that particular "incident." The top Reich officials decided that the cost of the damages done to German-owned buildings in which the Jewish shops and businesses were located and the loss of valuable merchandise must be borne by the ravished Jewish community: a fine of 1,000,000,000 Reichsmarks was imposed¹⁶ (though it was identified as an "Atonement Payment" for the murder of vom Rath in Paris). Moreover, the Jews were ordered to repair their premises at their own expense.

By stepped-up expropriation measures and government decrees Jews were excluded entirely from the German economy by the end of 1938.

The Nazis had begun by burning books. Then they burned synagogues and Torah scrolls. At times, they burned synagogues

or other buildings with their living victims inside. Finally they burned bodies and even decaying corpses by the millions. And because the German people, clergy, educators, professionals, and military leadership did not put out the early fires, those flames were the prelude to the firestorms that burned Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Dresden, Darmstadt and other German cities. Flames, smoke, and the stench of burning are central to the memory of those years.

The candles lit in commemoration of the victims, feeble as they may be, stand over against the fires of destruction. They represent the flickering human lives and spirits to which we pay homage in acts of remembrance. Though snuffed out with such ease, they stand for all that is human and fragilely hopeful in a world where mass murder can become the operative agenda of a nation state. Shaul Esh has insisted on "the dignity of the destroyed." Frieda Aaron marvels at the "spiritual resilience of the people in the ghettos and camps." That memory is "as compelling and as deserving" of a place in our memory as the destruction of their world. The contrast between the roaring fires and the tiny candle flames may remind us that the biblical witness testifies that God does not only speak out of the whirlwind or the earthquake, but sometimes only in a still, small voice.

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To what sober questions does this grim overview lead us, and what answers or signs of change or hope can we discern? Or, as

Albert Friedlander asks, "What do the children of time inherit from the past? How much of the demonic travelled through the shift in ages into the present?"¹⁷

Was there any reasonable possibility of a different scenario once the National Socialists controlled the state? Henry Huttenbach gives a compelling analysis of the competition for power and for the methods of implementing Nazi ideology (especially regarding Jews) that had been going on between the Brown Shirts (SA) and the Black Shirts (SS) since 1934 in his "Between Burning Books and Burning Bodies." The culmination of that struggle in November '38 had long-lasting and lethal consequences, as he shows. Was there any significant moral force or institution that might have had a countervailing effect on behalf of humaneness in general and the Jewish people in particular? "The Pogrom of Kristallnacht in Christian Context" shows that the churches in Germany were neither willing nor interested in speaking up or intervening on behalf of German Jews. Their dual heritage of anti-Judaic theology¹⁸ and a theology that conceded the state's preeminent role in anything non-spiritual (including determining the rights of subjects) made it a non-viable source of opposition to the policies of destruction about to be unleashed on a European-wide scale. Only a handful of exceptional individuals showed any awareness of how the church's ethics ought to have led it to respond. But the failure was not only with the Christian community of Germany. Franklin H. Littell reveals all too clearly that even in the

United States Reinhold Niebuhr was almost alone in his concern about what was happening or was about to happen in a Europe where Hitler and his minions were loosed. Niebuhr's pleas for responsible church and national action to aid the threatened victims received all too little attention or support.

The failure of the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and other free nations to respond to the plight of Europe's Jews before and during the war has been well documented by many scholars.¹⁷ Much less is generally known about the attitude and response of Australia, which had such enormous potential for absorbing immigrants and even needed a population capable of defending the continent. Paul Bartrop, who has lived in Australia all his life, gives a detailed account of how the Australian government and its spokesmen dealt with the challenge, and how they missed the opportunity to provide moral leadership to the international community at a time of unprecedented need.

The response of the valiant and daring individuals who risked their own lives, and often those of their families as well, in order to hide or rescue Jews (as well as to keep their own self-respect!) is one of the rare bright spots in the darkness that descended on Europe. Mordecai Paldiel and Lawrence Baron celebrate the rescuers among the Dutch and Polish people, while pointing out the important differences in the two national situations. Susan Zuccotti tells the less well-known story of how the Italians helped Jews to survive even while Italy was an ally of the Third Reich. After Italy surrendered and German

troops moved into northern Italy and set about imposing its "Final Solution" there, many Italians conspired to rescue Jews from the Nazi clutches.

How did the Jewish victims respond? Gershon Greenberg documents the weighty theological convictions of two Orthodox Polish rabbis written in the late 1930s. These rabbis viewed the contemporary ordeal as part of the long history of suffering and destruction experienced and somehow endured by the Jewish people throughout their long history. From that conviction they drew conclusions regarding necessary Jewish teshuvah. Greenberg shows how the influence and perspective of these rabbis were perpetuated in the years following. ^{By contrast,} Nechama Tec's account reveals the strategies and personal factors that, in addition to luck, enabled her family and herself to survive the entire period of German occupation of Poland.

What part does memory play in the lives of individuals-- especially survivors? Frieda Aaron recalls her youthful outlook and memories, the urge toward creativity, as well as the unimaginable ordeals with which she had to live in order to endure. But she looks at them also from the perspective of hindsight and maturity, marveling nevertheless at the functioning of chance in the final survival of her sister, mother, and self. She even finds that remembering and confronting that which terrified and wounded can at least provide clarity if not catharsis, though she also insists that remembering certain events may be "worse than the vacuous spaces memory both recoils

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from and strains to fill." (She admits that she has never yet spoken of some of the atrocities she witnessed and experienced.) Karl Plank considers the role that place plays in memory. Can survivors return to the place of their pre-Shoah life? If they do, what is the impact of the loss that such a return brings so vividly to the fore? Even with everything changed or vanished, the haunting memories -- good and evil -- cannot be evaded. Yet if one's place is not recoverable, where does one belong? and how does that affect one's sense of identity? Susan Lee Pentlin relates the experiences of several German women -- two of them also Jewish -- who found that the "new" post-war German states were not really very new but rather continuations of the former Germany. Some of them found that they had to find new places in which to live.

Can persons and nations evade the pain or guilt of the past by avoiding it? Renate Bethge tells of her own experiences as a German (though part of the large Bonhoeffer-Schleicher family that opposed Nazism from early on) in the immediate post-war years. Her reminiscences have a particular poignancy because of the great losses her own family experienced as a consequence of being part of the small German resistance movement. She also recalls how the date of the end of the war was meaningless and not even remembered until 1985 when so many Germans -- with the help of their chancellor and the American president -- sought to subvert the memory of what it really meant. She and her husband Eberhard Bethge also recount and evaluate some of the more

responsible, repentant, and reconciling efforts of other Germans, particularly within some of the churches and seminaries.

What function does the memory of the Shoah presently have in a religious community or a national society? Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, who grew up in post-war Poland, discusses the relations of today's Polish Roman Catholics and Jews (the latter, very few in number) and the national milieu in which that relationship must be lived. She pays particular attention to the historical heritage, attitudes of the "insiders" toward the "outsiders," unspoken assumptions, and especially the different memories each of the two communities has and has perpetuated. She points to the Polish people's persisting conviction that they would have become the second victims of genocide, and how that deflates the issue of antisemitism into racism in general so that the responsibility of the Polish Church's teachings is not taken into account as in any way relevant. The decision to obliterate the past -- amnestia -- is found in Austria as well as Germany. Richard Rubenstein provides a compelling analysis of the interrelations of Austria, Kurt Waldheim, and the Vatican. He looks at the Waldheim affair (the expose of Waldheim's war-time activities, his continuing denials in the face of hard evidence, and the Austrian response) in the context of Austria's role as a genocidal society with a history of antisemitic political parties that sought to eliminate Jews from the nation. Rubenstein remarks on the sorry but ineluctable fact that many Europeans--including Christians and their churches -- do not regret

"Hitler's abiding legacy, the effective elimination of the Jews." Such an acknowledgement necessarily puts 20th century European civilization (even since the Holocaust) in more of a shadow than is usually conceded. False memory, as epitomized in the Bitburg affair, is disowned and castigated by Eberhard Bethge.

How do we assess some contemporary issues in the dark shadow cast by the Shoah? While most of the emphasis in this volume, as in most considerations of the Holocaust, is on the Jewish victims (with some attention to the victimizers who eventually became victims as well), Gabrielle Tyrnauer turns our attention to Europe's Gypsies and their treatment by the Nazis. Since they represent the second largest victim community percentage-wise, she wonders why historians have neglected to record their disaster. (Although Tyrnauer does not go into great detail regarding the consequences of this failure, the record of continuing persecution and abuse of the Gypsies -- Romanis and Sintis -- in many European countries is an abysmal one. Not only do police and government authorities participate or look away when such mistreatment is dealt out, but often national laws and policies undergird discrimination and oppression. Nor is the United States totally immune.²⁹) A further contemporary issue is the need for vigilance with regard to the presence of or increase in antisemitism in any society. As part of that concern and in response to a widespread view that Jewish-Black relations in the United States have deteriorated seriously in recent years, the William O. Douglas Institute at the University of Washington

undertook a study of the attitudes of American Black Christians toward Jews. Hubert Locke reports on that study, which shows that the deterioration cannot be ascertained among the average church-going Black population (at least outside such urban centers as New York and Chicago where special issues have tainted the relationship). Hopeful as that is, Locke does not discount anti-Jewish attitudes among a "younger, more militant, non-religious segment of the Black populace."

The questions and issues addressed in this volume are not transitory ones that will vanish soon. The extinguishing of the fires of the crematoria and the opening of the gates of the camps have not put an end to the testing of our civilization; the challenge is still there. The questions must burn in our memories and sear our consciences so that we will deal with them responsibly and with commitment. "The Holocaust is still the burning ground over which every new generation in the twentieth century must pass."²¹

Notes

1. It is generally recognized that the period between the two world wars represented this type of response in Germany to a popularly perceived unnecessary capitulation to Allied forces and to unjust treaty terms. However, it may not be as well known that the Weimar governments themselves

manipulated economic affairs (1919-1923, and 1929-1931) so as to undercut the imposed reparations payments, even though such policies meant impoverishing the German people. Moreover, they were successful in removing the Versailles restraints on German rearmament by a number of diplomatic moves (Sebastian Haffner, The Ailing Empire: Germany from Bismarck to Hitler [New York: Fromm International Publishing Corp., 1989], pp. 131-34, 137-56, 169-71).

2. Many survivors of the Shoah, especially young survivors, testify to their early determination to put the past behind them and get on with their lives. Practical necessity was usually a partner to this determination, although an accompanying factor was often an unwillingness on the part of their new neighbors, co-workers, and friends to listen to any talk about their experiences (see, e.g., Michael N. Dobkowski, The Politics of Indifference: A Documentary History of Holocaust Victims in America [Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982]). The resolve to create new lives for themselves, to become part of their new communities, and to become "safe" from any subsequent attack on themselves produced many successful careers in education, science, business, social service jobs, etc.

Nevertheless, several decades later, many (most?) found their "armor" or protective shells weakening against the onslaughts of memories thought to be successfully buried in the deep recesses of their minds. This was true even for

very young survivors who had been thought too young at the time to have any traumatic memories (see Julie Heifetz, Too Young to Remember [Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989]). The consequences of the assault of these memories are several: 1) psychosomatic ills that call for psychiatric treatment ; 2) the creation of written, audio, or video testimonies regarding the past they had tried to "forget"; 3) readiness to tell their stories to students and other interested groups, and to help establish Holocaust centers, museums, and educational programs in order to perpetuate the story after the survivors will have passed from the scene. Resources regarding the first of these consequences include Dr. Jan Bastiaans's video recording of a survivor patient undergoing specialized treatment, "Now You Know Why I Am Crying"; extensive psychiatric studies by Leo Eitinger, Judith Kestenberg et al, Hilel Klein, Heinrich Winnik; and special issues of Journal of Psychology and Judaism (1981 and 1982) and Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy (1980). Survivor testimonies can be found in a growing number of audio and video archives (including the Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University, the U. S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Center for Holocaust Studies, Documentation, and Research, of Brooklyn, N. Y. which is merging with A Living Memorial to the Holocaust-Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York City). First hand published accounts are so numerous that an extensive bibliography

would be required, however, some outstanding and recent examples are Nechama Tec, Dry Tears (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Samuel Pisar, Of Blood and Hope (Boston & Toronto: Little, Brown, and Co., 1979); Henry Orenstein, I Shall Live: Surviving the Holocaust 1939-1945 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). Anton Gill's The Journey Back from Hell: Conversations with Concentration Camp Survivors (London, Toronto, etc: Grafton Books, 1988, 1989) recounts experiences of more than 100 survivors.

3. Cited in Albert Friedlander, A Thread of Gold: Journeys Toward Reconciliation (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, and London: SCM Press, 1990), pp. 41-42.
4. Paul Ricoeur, a French theologian, called for Christians to subject their tradition to a "hermeneutic of suspicion"--scrutinizing it for all aspects that have helped to produce injustice, suffering, indifference, or callousness to others. At the same time he recommended that Christians engage in a process of "retrieval" of all that is moral, compassionate, and open to others (Freud and Philosophy [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970]). David Tracy, among others, advocates the use of these categories; and the rethinking of Christian theology by a host of scholars and theologians is motivated by this type of approach.

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5. Although General Erich Ludendorff was the first to openly make the "stab-in-the-back" accusation, Friedrich Ebert, head of the new Social Democratic government, had actually paved the way for it by greeting the soldiers returning to Berlin in December 1918 with the words: "You were not beaten by any enemy. Only when the opponent's superiority of men and materiel became more pressing did we give up the fight. . . . You can return with head held high" (Haffner, The Ailing Empire, pp. 131, 134).
6. This included the creation of martyrs out of some unsavory early Party members, the use of the "blood flag" or flag of the martyrs of 1923, a ghostly roll call accompanied by dipped Party banners, the representation of the martyrs as a sacrificial offering on behalf of the suffering nation and a pledge to carry out the unfinished task for which they had given their all.
7. See Eberhard Bethge's essay in this volume.
8. Werner Weinberg, Self-Portrait of a Holocaust Survivor (Jefferson, N.C. and London: McFarland & Co., 1985), p. 69.
9. Eberhard Bethge, letter to the present author, 29 March 1990.
10. The New York Times, 25 September 1990, p. A10. Nevertheless, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Government resisted the idea of making November 9 a national holiday (ibid.)

11. Jan Blonski, "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto," Christian Jewish Relations [London] 22, 3 & 4 (1989): 6.

12. The officer corps of the Wehrmacht had looked with disdain at "the little corporal" from the beginning of Hitler's rise to power, and expected to be able to use him for its own purposes -- particularly that of disposing of the Weimar Republic and the Versailles Treaty it had signed. In turn, Hitler disdained the officer corps as an outmoded and elitist cadre. Unless they would follow his plans, they were useless and would be dispensed with. In February 1938 he dismissed General Werner von Blomberg, Minister of War, and General Werner Fritsch, Commander in Chief of the Army, for their opposition to his announced plans for war (revealed to top military and political leaders in November 1937), first with Austria and then with Czechoslovakia. Hitler then took over direct command of the Wehrmacht and never made any attempt to conceal his contempt for it. (The Waffen SS were to be the point of his spear.) When General Ludwig Beck, Chief of the General Staff, became alarmed at Hitler's foreign policy and war aims, as revealed by his orchestration of the Sudeten-Czech crisis in the summer of 1938, he sought to dissuade the Führer and, failing that, to convince the commanding generals of all three services to make a united stand against a general war. Hitler simply ignored Beck and worked around him through more amenable generals until Beck resigned (in August) and quietly

departed. From then on Hitler faced no serious opposition from the military, even when it faced annihilation by the fighting forces of the "United Nations." Though plans to shackle Hitler or remove him from power were discussed off and on from then on among a small circle of officers, until July 1944 they bore no fruit, and that final effort at assassination went awry and a widespread bloodbath of the conspirators followed.

Hitler's co-opting of the Wehrmacht (renamed the Reichswehr) for his annihilation policies in Eastern Europe after June 1941 further reveals its collapse as a moral or political counterforce within Germany.

13. Their elimination from German's political life had been consummated in 1935 by the Nuremberg decrees.
14. The numbers given for the synagogues destroyed are quite confusing, contradictory, and generally grossly understated. Most historians list 191, while a few give the number of 290 or "a few hundred." The first figure is the one provided by SS Reinhard Heydrich just a few days after the pogrom, and is certainly incomplete. It is not clear what the sources of the other figures are. In none of the cases is it made clear whether Austrian synagogues, or those of the recently annexed Sudeten-Czech territory, are included in the count. A quite different set of figures is proved ^{id} by the "50 Years 'Kristallnacht' Committee" on the basis of recent research.

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According to this Committee (established in 1985) 978 synagogues in Germany, Austria, and the former Czech territory were burned or otherwise destroyed, totally or partly, during 9-11 November 1938. An additional 254 prayer rooms in those areas were similarly destroyed or damaged, for a total of 1,232. In areas that are today located in Poland and the USSR but were then within the Third Reich, another 140 synagogues and 34 prayer rooms were demolished or vandalized (letter dated July 1988 from "50 Years 'Kristallnacht' [Committee], Old City, Jerusalem, Israel).

15. On November 12-14, 1938 the Nazis in Danzig burned two of the main synagogues, and a few days later this example was followed in Memel (a city formerly in East Prussia, but given autonomous status within Lithuania in the inter-war period). See Gu"nter Grass, "What Shall We Tell Our Children?," Danzig 1938: Treasures of a Destroyed Community (New York: The Jewish Museum, and Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980), p. 22; Henry Huttenbach, "The International Response to the Plight of Danzig Jews," in Franklin H. Littell, Irene G. Shur, Claude R. Foster, Jr., eds., In Answer (West Chester, PA: Sylvan Publishers, Ltd., 1988), p. 188; Martin Gilbert, The Holocaust (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1985), p. 74.

The Jews of Danzig had already experienced a pogrom 'u

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October 1937 (Huttenbach, ibid.).

16. When the final collection was made in August 1939, 5% more was added, and the final sum Reich Jews made over to the Finance Ministry was 1,265,000,000 marks (Nora Levin, The Holocaust [New York: Schocken Books, 1973], p. 86).
17. A Thread of Gold, p. 4.
18. Heinrich von Trott du Solz and his wife acknowledge the constraints of Christian doctrine that weakened the courage of church members to show solidarity with Jews (cited by Friedlander in A Thread of Gold, p. 38). Many Christians of Germany were infected with the virus of antisemitism as well (see Eckardt essay "The Kristallnacht Pogrom in Christian Context").
19. With regard to the United States in particular, see David Wyman, Henry Feingold, Barbara McDonald, Saul Friedman, and Arthur Morse; regarding Canada, see Irving Abella and Harold Troper; for Switzerland, see Alfred Häsler; with respect to Great Britain, see Bernard Wasserstein; about the Allies in general, see Martin Gilbert and Monty Penkower.
20. In June 1986 the Swiss Government admitted that one of its official agencies, Pro Juventute, had been kidnapping Romani children systematically since 1926, putting them up for adoption or leaving them in orphanages or mental institutions. The number of 619 children was acknowledged

for the last few decades, though Swiss Gypsies claim that the number is much higher than that. Government authorities said the intent was "to destroy the nucleus of their families [so] we could civilize them" and "to keep order" (National Public Radio report, 18 June). In Italy police raided a "Zingaro" (Gypsy) camp and carried away the children. Parents were refused access to them, and the following morning were told that their children "were gone" (Romanija [newsletter] 4, 3 [July 1986]: 5). The November 1990 issue of Internet on the Holocaust and Genocide (No. 29; Tel Aviv, Israel) reported the following instances of abuse: In Romania Gypsies are starved and beaten for not surrendering their jewelry to the new non-Communist government; police are known to knock out Gypsies' teeth with a pistol if they notice gold fillings, and hit them with rifle butts if they speak Romani in public. In Czechoslovakia the forced sterilization of Gypsy women and the permanent removal of their children to government homes was continuing despite protests from humanitarian organizations and the U. S. Congressional Caucus on Human Rights. In Hungary reports said that Gypsies were "routinely beaten up and sometimes murdered while authorities look the other way." Lynching of Gypsies was reported from two towns in Spain.

In 1987 the police of Karlsruhe, West Germany issued a publication warning about groups against whom people should

especially be on their guard, and included Gypsies along with "gangsters, scoundrels and crooks, marriage imposters, . . . and shady characters." A suit against the police for slander brought by the Central Council of the German Sinti and Roma was dismissed by the courts on the grounds that it was not slanderous (Internet, No. 11, September 1987). In the United States Michigan police formed a "Michigan Gypsy Criminal Activity Task Force" and in April 1985 held a widely publicized seminar on "Gypsy crime." Both actions received much media coverage (Romania [Newsletter of the United States Romani Council], 3, 3 [September 1985]:5). In Pennsylvania statutes that required all Gypsy groups to obtain a license in order to settle in any county and provided for seizure of their property if a license were not shown were not repealed until 1987 (On the Scene [ADL], 5, 1 [Winter 1987]).

21. Alfred Kazin, "Americans Right, Left and Indifferent: Responses to the Holocaust," Dimensions [New York] 4, 1 (1988): 9. It is unlikely that the challenge will end with the turn into the twenty-first century.