

SIXTY YEARS AFTER THE
FOUNDING OF THE JEWISH
STATE: ARE GERMAN-ISRAELI
RELATIONS STILL "SPECIAL"?

AICGS GERMAN-AMERICAN ISSUES

08

Michael Brenner
Lily Gardner Feldman
Harald Kindermann
Shimon Stein
Frank Stern



AT JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY



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FOREWORD

In the sixty years since Israel's founding, German-Israeli relations have been nothing if not complex. From Israel's non-recognition of Germany to German Chancellor Angela Merkel's speech before the Knesset in March 2008, the evolution of the "special" relationship between these two countries is remarkable. That this relationship—and the two countries' identities—has flourished into the close political, economic, and cultural ties enjoyed today, despite being shaped fundamentally by the Holocaust, is cause for reflection on the sixtieth anniversary of Israel.

The essays presented here stem from a conference titled "German-Israeli Relations Sixty Years Later: Are They Still Special?" which brought together policymakers, scholars, and journalists to discuss the political and cultural dimensions of the German-Israeli relationship. This conference was co-sponsored with the American Jewish Committee in July 2008. The authors in this volume examine the issue of remembrance, the fading of the survivor generation, the new challenges faced by both countries in the twenty-first century, and the idea of a "normal" relationship between Germany and Israel from a variety of perspectives: policy, history, and culture.

Harald Kindermann, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Israel, finds that the German-Israeli relationship is shaped by the Shoah. As time passes, Germany must help maintain remembrance among both the survivors and perpetrators of the Shoah, and is already doing so through local religious and cultural institutions in Germany and through new forms of remembrance, such as media, film, and the Internet. Indeed, German-Israeli relations are "unique" not only in the political sphere, but across society as a whole. Sports, educational, and cultural interaction and partnerships, for example, between the two countries help to create a new form of remembrance for younger generations.

From the Israeli perspective, former Ambassador of Israel to the Federal Republic of Germany Shimon Stein also does not think of German-Israeli relations as "special," but, rather, as "unique" as a result of the Shoah. This relationship is not "normal," either, because of Germany's declared moral-historical commitment to the security of Israel and Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. He cites the March 2008 joint cabinet session, on the occasion of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's address to the Knesset, as an important public display of symbolism of Germany's commitment to Israel. However, despite the unique, non-normal character of German-Israeli relations, normalization is underway among the German public, as memory of the Shoah fades. Germany and Israel will need to identify issues of common interest and complementary policy if they want to conserve and enhance their unique relationship.

Dr. Lily Gardner Feldman discusses the evolution of relations between Germany and Israel from the post-war period to the twenty-first century and states that there is a remarkable shift from enmity to amity, as a result of five factors: pragmatism, morality and history, leadership, societal interactions, and international context. Israel's moral objection in the early 1950s to Germany's continuing possession of the plunder against Jews during the course of the Third Reich as well as Israel's need for economic support led it to interact with Germany. Likewise, Germany's moral shame for the horrors of the Holocaust as well as domestic and foreign pressure to support world Jewry and Israel led to its moral and pragmatic support of Israel. Now, in the twenty-

first century, leaders of both countries say that it is a friendly relationship built on mutual trust. Gardner Feldman states that Merkel's March 2008 visit was a "consolidation" of the policies and remembrance that have made the German-Israeli relationship special. Yet, as the generation of Holocaust survivors fades, maintaining the duality of the German-Israeli relationship (i.e., the moral-historical commitment and the pragmatic interests) will be a new challenge.

However, despite the remarkable shift over the past sixty years, German-Israeli relations are not without their differing perceptions on both sides, as discussed by Professor Michael Brenner. Controversies, such as the Bubis-Walser debate, are in large part due to the incongruity of a shared past but a different memory. In the aftermath of 1968, a new consensus emerged in German society about confronting the past and learning from it. Such a consensus seemed self-evident but quickly changed in the 1990s. As the debate over how to look at the past grew, some portrayed Germans as victims, moving beyond the idea of a society of shame in the post-war years and a society of guilt following 1968. The twenty-first century generation is shaped less by guilt and more by the idea of responsibility for one's own past.

Finally, Professor Frank Stern looks at how visual culture is able to relate remembrance and the German-Israeli relationship to those distanced from the policy world. Attitudes and perspectives of the Shoah are increasingly reflected in popular culture, including in oral history projects, theater, and literature. The field of Holocaust Studies is reaching out to new generations, ethnic groups, and educators. Films reflect the struggles facing Germany and Israel independently, but always under the shadow of the Shoah—Germany's search for a national identity and history, Israel's way of coping with the Intifada and terrorism. In many ways, the history of the Holocaust is being modernized to cope with twenty-first century struggles: gender equality, persecution of minority groups, racism, and anti-Semitism, among others.

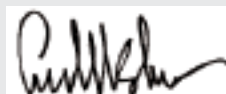
AICGS is grateful to the American Jewish Committee, particularly Rabbi Andrew Baker, Director of International Jewish Affairs, and Deidre Berger, Director of the AJC Berlin office, for their generous support of this project. The Institute would also like to thank Lily Gardner Feldman for her guidance, Jessica Riester for her work on this publication, and Aaron Martin for his assistance.

It is our hope that this volume will be a stepping-stone in the discussion on the German-Israeli relationship and we welcome any responses to it.

Best regards,



Dr. Jack Janes
Executive Director
AICGS



Rabbi Andrew Baker
Director of International Jewish Affairs
American Jewish Committee

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Michael Brenner is Professor of Jewish History and Culture at Ludwig Maximilians University in Munich. He has published widely on modern Jewish history, including his *The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany* (1996), *After the Holocaust: Rebuilding Jewish Lives in Postwar Germany* (1997), and *Zionism: A Brief History* (2003). He has been a visiting professor at Stanford, Budapest, Paris, and Haifa universities and was the Ina Levine Invitational Scholar at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2007/08.

Dr. Lily Gardner Feldman is currently a Senior Fellow in Residence at the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies/The Johns Hopkins University, where she is completing a book entitled *From Enmity to Amity: Germany's Reconciliation with France, Israel, the Czech Republic and Poland*. She also directs the Institute's Society, Culture, and Politics Program. She has a Ph.D. in Political Science from MIT. From 1978 until 1991, Dr. Gardner Feldman was a professor of political science (tenured) at Tufts University in Boston. She was also a Research Associate at Harvard University's Center for European Studies, where she chaired the German Study Group and edited *German Politics and Society*; and a Research Fellow at Harvard University's Center for International Affairs, where she chaired the Seminar on the European Community and undertook research in the University Consortium for Research on North America. From 1990 until 1995, Dr. Gardner Feldman was the first Research Director of AICGS and its Co-director in 1995. From 1995 until 1999, she was a Senior Scholar in Residence at the BMW Center for German and European Studies at Georgetown University. She returned to Johns Hopkins University in 1999. Dr. Gardner Feldman has published widely in the U.S. and Europe on German foreign policy, German-Jewish relations, international reconciliation, non-state entities as foreign policy players, and the EU as an international actor. Her most recent publication is "Non-Governmental Actors in Germany's Foreign Policy of Reconciliation," in Anne-Marie Le Gloanec, ed., *Non-State Actors in International Relations: The Case of Germany* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2007). Her work on Germany's foreign policy of reconciliation has led to lecture tours in Japan (2006) and South Korea (2007).

Amb. Dr. Harald Kindermann is the current Ambassador of Germany to Israel. Previously, Dr. Kindermann served as the German Ambassador to Bulgaria and to Saudi Arabia. From 1992 until 1999, he was head of the Policy Planning Staff in the Federal Foreign Office. Dr. Kindermann has also worked for the Ministry of Justice and as a lecturer at the University of Giessen. Dr. Kindermann studied law at the Universities of Erlangen, Marburg, and Cologne and received his Doctor of Law degree from the University of Giessen. In 2005, Dr. Kindermann received an honorary doctorate from the University of Svichtov.

Amb. Shimon Stein, the former ambassador of Israel to Germany, joined the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1974, where he first served as chief analyst at the Center for Political Research until 1980. In 1979, he was Trainee at the European Communities. From 1980 until 1985, Mr. Stein worked at the Embassy of Israel, Bonn, as Counselor for Political Affairs. Further steps of his career include membership in the Israeli delegation to the CSCE conference, Mediterranean Chapter (1984) and Acting Director of the North America Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem (1985-1986). From 1986 until 1988, Amb. Stein was

Deputy Director of the Office of the Director General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, and from 1988 until 1993 he was Minister-Counselor for political affairs at the Embassy of the State of Israel in Washington, D.C. As minister and director of the department for Disarmament and Arms Control at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, Amb. Stein was a member of Israel's delegation to the CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty) and head of the Israeli delegation to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. In 1988, he served as Deputy Director General for the CIS as well as Eastern and Central Europe at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jerusalem, where he was responsible for overseeing the expansion of Israel's contacts with the twenty-seven countries of this region. From 2001 and 2007, Amb. Stein was the Ambassador of Israel to the Federal Republic of Germany. In the course of his tenure, he established and maintained extensive contacts with the German political, economic, military, scientific, and cultural leaders at the *Länder* and the federal level. Amb. Stein holds a B.A. in Political Science and Modern History and M.A. in Modern History from The Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Dr. Frank Stern is Professor for contemporary visual and cultural history at the Institute for Contemporary History, University of Vienna. He has taught at Tel-Aviv University, at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev where he established the Center for German Studies and the Austrian-German study track. He taught as visiting professor at Georgetown University, Washington D.C., at Columbia University, and at Humboldt University Berlin. In research, teaching, and publications he focuses on contemporary German and Austrian history and culture, on Jewish cultural history, on Israeli-European relation, Israeli and Palestinian film, and Jewish topics in international cinema. He has published in German, English, and Hebrew. Dr. Stern earned his Ph.D. in History from the University of Tel Aviv.



ESSAYS

A UNIQUE RELATIONSHIP

HARALD KINDERMANN

German-Israeli relations in the twenty-first century are both complex and amicable relations. With their shared histories—and with current geopolitical realities—Germany and Israel are far from having an ordinary relationship and it will not become ordinary in the future.

The Shoah has practically erased Jewish life in Germany. Deeply marked by the country where they had once been German patriots and citizens, most survivors left Germany for the newly-formed state of Israel. Once there, relations with Germany seemed unimaginable. In Israelis' passports one could read: Valid for all countries—except Germany.

Yet it was the survivors who engaged with Germany in a way that we still admire today. During the decades following the Shoah, many of them helped to restore and develop the relationship between Israel and Germany. As unique as the Shoah is, so, too, is the German-Israeli relationship unique.

If we think today about what Germans can and must do in the future, our concentration is on maintaining the remembrance of the Shoah among the second, third, indeed already the fourth generation of descendants of survivors and perpetrators. Survivors of the Shoah, speaking in Germany in front of students and other young people, strongly advocate educating the younger generations on this history. Their direct witness is a special form of remembrance that will not be available to us for much longer. We have to consider new forms of remembrance—new media, films, and the internet. One such interesting example is the combination of remembrance and information as displayed in the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin with its underground information center.

In Germany we try to create remembrance locally. Students explore the history of Jewish life and people in their hometowns. They look into Jews' fates, they explore how the perpetrators were dealt with, and they visit the new Jewish communities—including the synagogues—which exist today in many German towns. This is how young Germans learn that the Shoah was not only an international tragedy but also something that happened in their homes and communities and which is inseparable from modern life.

Unique relations such as those between Germany and Israel cannot be regulated by politics. They exist only when supported by the whole society; for this reason, the partnerships between German and Israeli cities, sports clubs, schools, and universities, in short all bodies of civil society, are so important. The visits and exchanges that result create an awareness of the other country, leaving deep marks on both sides and having a lasting effect.

In order to give Israeli students the opportunity to know Germany better the German government established centers for German studies at the Universities of Haifa and Tel Aviv. Furthermore, Germany and Israel will concentrate even more on our cultural relations: Many works by Israeli authors have been translated into German and are frequently read in Germany. German literature is published in Hebrew. Co-productions in the film industry have gained international recognition.

We do not act in these fields as Germans alone, but as Europeans. The European Union and Israel now work closely on expanding cooperation with respect to the EU's Neighborhood Policy. Fighting anti-Semitism is a central part of this cooperation. We have to counteract every form of xenophobia, racism,

and anti-Semitism. The anti-Semitism of brutal hooligans and primitive slogans must be fought together with the anti-Semitism that comes in elegant words and on pretty paper and which commonly seems to be even more poisonous. Germany's cooperation with Israel, Yad Vashem, and all other organizations which work in this field is extremely intense.

Today, anti-Semitism often appears as a form of anti-Israelism. Opponents of Israel say that they are not against Jews, but against Israel as a state of apartheid and aggressive violence. We therefore always have to talk about Israel when talking about anti-Semitism. We have to counteract falsification and a propaganda which left the area of constructive criticism, a characteristic for good and vital relations. Israel is not the result of the Shoah but, rather, is the historic response to the Shoah. It must be remembered that Israel is a successful democracy, a country with freedom of the press, and governed by the rule of law.

Outside of Israel, the largest Jewish population is in the United States. Active in its support—both ideologically and financially—of Israel, the Jewish community in the U.S. is a vibrant part of that country's culture. To further German-Jewish understanding, it is essential to also engage American Jews, many of whom once fled an anti-Semitic Germany. Thus, Germany must extend and deepen its cooperation with Jewish organizations and communities in the U.S. By building on the transatlantic partnership that has connected Germany and the U.S. for so many years, the goals of remembrance, of uniting civil societies, and of fighting anti-Semitism can reach a wider audience and can be preserved for future generations.

GERMAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS SIXTY YEARS LATER: ARE THEY STILL UNIQUE?

SHIMON STEIN

Definitions and Measurement

German-Israeli relations are often termed "special." This appellation raises the general question of why they are called "special" and the specific questions of who defines them that way, and what the yardsticks are by which one can measure "special." Germany itself defines its relations with some of its neighbors, such as France, as special, and demonstrates specialness through a variety of agreements which distinguishes those special relations from ties Germany has with other countries. If, along these lines, we ask what distinguishes these "special" relations with neighbors from the German-Israeli relationship, then the clear answer is the Shoah. I prefer, therefore, to characterize German-Israeli relations as unique.

For obvious reasons that have to do with the burden of Germany's past, German politicians dealt with and still deal with the issue of characterizing relations more than Israelis do. Already at an early stage of relations, there were German politicians who spoke about "normal relations." German Chancellor Willy Brandt termed the relationship in an equally vague manner: "normal relations with a special character," which begs the question of whether a relationship can be special, or unique, and normal at the same time.

A manifestation, or measurement, of the fact that the relationship is not normal has to do with Germany's declaratory, moral-historical commitment to the security and the existence of Israel. I emphasize declaratory commitment because there is no clear understanding regarding the operational meaning of such a commitment, as was sometimes evident when I posed the question to German politicians. From the

Israeli perspective, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and efforts to resolve it in a two-state solution, Israel's existence must preserve the Jewish character of the state. With the exception of Chancellor Angela Merkel, there are only a few German politicians who add the words "as a Jewish state" when they speak about the German commitment to the existence of Israel. An additional challenge to what the declaratory commitment to Israel's existence and security means in fact emerges in the context of the threat from Iran: what actual steps will Germany take if the Iranian threat becomes imminent? With regard to the Iranian threat and its operational implication, once again, it has been Chancellor Merkel who has recognized that the moment of truth is approaching for Germany.

The Development and Content of Relations

As to the development and content of relations, I am not sure I endorse the view that German-Israeli relations evolved seamlessly from their beginning in the early 1950s through today. Allow me to address both myth and reality in the course of German-Israeli relations. Without going into detail, I would suggest that nothing in the pre-formal stage (that is, before diplomatic relations) and in the formal stage was self-evident or automatic, although against the backdrop of the Shoah one might have assumed this. For example, the bitter debate in Germany over the 1952 Reparations Agreement with Israel and the German government's painful stumbling into the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1965 underscore the fact that nothing was straightforward. Nonetheless, looking back across forty-three years of formal relations since diplomatic ties in the mid-1960s, one can say that the overall balance of what has been

achieved is remarkable especially if one considers where we started both on the political and on the people-to-people level.

Yet, up until recently, these relations have lacked something, as I reflected when we sought to inject an element of symbolism (comparable to Germany's institutional relations with France, Poland, Italy) through the joint German-Israeli cabinet session on the occasion of the 60th anniversary and the March 2008 visit to Israel by Chancellor Merkel. As someone who contributed to that event, let me say that the new consultation mechanism we devised is an important public display of symbolism. An additional, ongoing idea is to appoint a coordinator for German-Israeli relations in the German and Israeli governments, comparable to the coordinator position in Franco-German and German-American relations.

Beyond the strictly bilateral relationship, how does the special relationship play out today in specific policy areas such as the EU, the Middle East peace process, and Iran? On EU-Israel issues, one should note first the trend of ceding sovereignty on foreign policy questions, especially the Middle East, from Berlin to Brussels, resulting in the declining importance of national declaratory policy. That said, Germany has helped to protect Israel's interests within the EU, and to enhance the structured relations between Israel and the EU around the notion of Israel's "special status," articulated initially in the 1994 Essen summit and expressed today in the EU-Israel Reflection Group, that is examining mechanisms to deepen political dialogue and expand Israeli participation in major EU programs.

Regarding the Middle East peace process, Germany has been engaged in a variety of ways. Noteworthy is the special role that the then-Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer played on the ground (especially through frequent visits to the region) and in policy terms: both EU policies on the conflict and the Quartet's (EU, U.S., UN, Russia) Road Map. Chancellor Merkel and Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier have also been actively involved in the process.

Foreign Minister Fischer also played a leading role on

Iran by placing the issue on the EU agenda. However, Israel is disappointed that Germany and the EU as a whole have not complemented the UN sanctions with bilateral sanctions. Israel believes that much more can and should be done on the diplomatic, economic, and financial fronts to persuade Iran that there is a price for not suspending the enrichment program.

The Future of the Unique Relationship

Is the unique relationship long-lasting or will it become normal at some point? Do we see already in Germany a process which might lead to normalization? As far as German public opinion is concerned, such a process of normalization seems to be underway. Public opinion polls since the beginning of the 1980s show a growing lack of sympathy, criticism, and indifference with regard to Israel. A significant erosion among German public opinion occurred at the dawn of the millennium when the societal normalization process coincided with the "new normalcy" political process (Walser-Bubis debate; remarks of Jürgen Möllemann and Martin Hohman; Germans as victims). Despite these societal and political developments, the official attitude of the political elite has not changed, at least on the declaratory level.

Regarding the future, I would say that we face new challenges in trying to preserve the uniqueness of the German-Israeli relationship. The challenges also have to do with the "new normalcy." In my view, the so-called "memory" or "Shoah" pillar of the relationship will not be sufficient to preserve ties. There will be a growing tension between Israeli expectations stemming from the "moral and historical" commitment and German Realpolitik of pursuing national interests, some elements of which we already witnessed, for example in the Menachem Begin-Helmut Schmidt fall-out in the early 1980s; in the first Gulf war and German assistance to Saddam Hussein for building his chemical industry in the early 1990s; and in trade relations with Iran today.

As uniqueness declines, we will have to identify practical issues of common interest to conserve, and maybe enhance, the relationship. Germany has to remain Israel's strategic partner at the bilateral level

and as a member of the EU, with which Israel will also have to deepen its connection. Reprising an earlier suggestion, the path will be difficult and not self-evident.

ARE GERMAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS STILL "SPECIAL"?

THE GERMAN-ISRAELI PARTNERSHIP: IS IT STILL “SPECIAL”?

LILY GARDNER FELDMAN

This essay addresses the issue of whether the German-Israeli relationship is still “special” by contrasting relations in the immediate post-war period, directly after the Holocaust, with the German-Israeli partnership today, sixty years later. Such an exercise will reveal an amazing journey from enmity to amity, and pinpoint the reasons for a dramatic shift in ties.

The Early 1950s

From Israel's founding in 1948 until its two diplomatic Notes of 1951 sent to the four occupation powers asking for compensation from Germany, the Jewish state was essentially silent with respect to Germany, rendered voiceless by the enormity of the horrors and suffering of the Holocaust.¹ The two Notes were not addressed to Germany as Israel wanted no connection with the perpetrators of the Holocaust.

Just a year later, Israel began to negotiate with Germany directly for two reasons. First, Prime Minister David Ben Gurion believed that there was a moral necessity, just as the opposition to direct talks with Germany, spearheaded by Menachem Begin, also used moral arguments. Quoting the Bible, Ben Gurion said it was terrible that the Nazis had murdered and robbed, but that they should not also keep what they had plundered. The second reason for dealing finally with Germany directly related to the dire state of the fledgling Israeli economy. Following extensive discussions with Jewish and non-Jewish leaders across the globe, Israeli leaders concluded that Germany was the only source for a major infusion of capital and goods, necessitating face-to-face negotiations. The resulting Luxembourg Agreement of 1952 on reparations provided the state of Israel with

goods in kind in the amount of 3 billion marks, with 450 million marks going to the Conference on Material Claims Against Germany for individual Jews around the world. Individual Israelis also received payments via Germany's domestic compensation and restitution laws.

The combination of morality and pragmatism on the Israeli side was also evident on the German side. Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was driven by genuine morality in offering negotiations to Israel, but there were also highly pragmatic reasons: domestic pressure from the Social Democratic opposition and international pressure from the three Western allies, particularly the U.S. who indicated that Germany would not regain its sovereignty until it made a major initiative to world Jewry and Israel.

At the time of the Reparations Agreement, and since, Israel refused to use the German term, *Wiedergutmachung* (making good), because restoration could never happen given the nature and magnitude of the crimes; Israel preferred the Hebrew word *shilumim*, meaning material compensation. Israel's deep antipathy toward Germany also was evident in the fact that there was neither handshake nor speech at the signing of the Agreement, which took place in Luxembourg, rather than in Germany or Israel. Israel's desire for an extremely limited relationship was also expressed in its refusal during the Luxembourg negotiations to contemplate the idea Germany floated of diplomatic relations (by the time Israel was ready in the mid-1950s Germany rejected the proposal out of fear of Arab retaliation and the need to invoke the Hallstein Doctrine). During this early period, an additional sign of Israeli deep reluctance to deal with Germany was the restriction in Israeli passports precluding visits to Germany.

Sixty Years Later

More than five decades after the inauspicious beginning of ties,² in February 2005 during German President Horst Köhler's visit to Israel, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon spoke of "friendly relations" that are "full and fruitful" and he thanked the German government for "leading the battle against anti-Semitism in Europe." Both sides on that occasion invoked the notion of trust to characterize ties.³

In the many speeches given in 2005 for the fortieth anniversary of diplomatic relations, Israel also often thanked Germany for playing the role of mediator, at Israel's request, in the negotiations with Lebanon and Hezbollah that led to the January 2004 swap of Arab and Palestinian prisoners, in part on German soil, for the remains of Israeli soldiers in Lebanon.⁴ Germany also played a similar role in negotiating with Iran over a missing Israeli soldier. It was a German intermediary, with Israeli blessing, who brokered the most recent prisoner swap between Israel and Hezbollah in July 2008.⁵ In an area of extreme sensitivity, then, Israel has trusted Germany. Also in these fortieth anniversary speeches, Israel constantly referred to Germany as one of its most important friends and partners.⁶

Since then, the notions of robust friendship and deep trust have formed a constant refrain in Israeli characterizations of the relationship with Germany, culminating in the joint session of the German and Israeli cabinets during Chancellor Angela Merkel's March 2008 visit to Israel and her speech to the Knesset. The joint session was a first for Israel, and amounted to a "consolidation" of habits of policy preference and remembrance that have constituted a special relationship between Germany and Israel in the last six decades. The chancellor's speech to the Knesset was also special, as this honor was previously reserved for heads of state and monarchs.⁷

In his address to the Knesset in honor of Chancellor Merkel, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert summed up how far the two countries had come in six decades, without forgetting the past: "The deep bonds of friendship between Germany and Israel are not normal between two nations. They carry with them

the oppressive weight of the historic memory to which our peoples are obligated, but it is because of this that they have such power, sensitivity and content which has no equal in any other place or between two sovereign nations in the international arena. These 'special relations' are an example of rising above the gloomy dark remnants without denting them, and of the human ability to overcome and build a stable bridge above the chasms."⁸

The Determinants of Change

How did this remarkable transformation come about in the short space of sixty years after Israel's founding? There are five factors that account for this achievement: pragmatism, morality and history, leadership, societal interactions, and international context.

PRAGMATISM

We noted above the combination of morality and pragmatism that propelled Germany and Israel in the early 1950s. That mixture continued and led to a range of policy and institutional connections between governments in economics, in science, and in defense, just to indicate three examples. Germany felt an ongoing moral need to help Israel, but the pragmatic motives were also clear. Today, there is a clear focus from both sides on hard interests.

In the economics sphere, Germany is Israel's most important trade partner in Europe; Israel's second biggest trading partner after the U.S.; and the EU is overall Israel's key trade partner. German firms are drawn to Israel's pioneering achievements in a wide range of technology.

In science, relations began already in the 1950s, and have blossomed into a relationship second only to the one Israel enjoys with the U.S. Institutional connections had encompassed more than 20,000 scientists by the end of the 1990s, and reached 25,000 by 2008. In addition to the benefits of developing an epistemic community in science, for Germany, Israel has provided special geographic and climactic conditions closed to German scientists at home, and excellence in science and technology. Israel benefits

markedly from German contributions to collaborative science projects and to Israeli scientific institutions

In defense, where relations also developed already in the 1950s, Israel sold Germany UZI machine guns, and Israel provided access to captured Soviet weapons. For Israel, Germany was one of the few countries who would supply weapons. Even though the official military relationship ended in the mid-1960s (taken up by the U.S.), Israel still receives weapons from Germany today, despite Germany's tight restrictions on the export of arms to "areas of tension." And there has been a very important relationship in military training and in intelligence matters.

MORALITY AND HISTORY

Moving forward after the early 1950s meant neither forgetting the past nor forgiveness, as Israeli leaders frequently remind Germany. Israel is vigilant about any signs of anti-Semitism and right-wing extremism in the Federal Republic, echoing its concern in meetings with German leaders, but also praising German officialdom for its engagement against xenophobia of all kinds. And, for the most part, the German government has made the past a constant companion in this incredible journey, as seen in memorials, in the fight against anti-Semitism, and in support of the work of non-governmental organizations in the field of Holocaust education, for example, *Aktion Sühnezeichen/Friedensdienst*; Fritz Bauer Institut, *Gegen Vergessen/Für Demokratie*; *Lernen aus der Geschichte*; *Gesellschaften für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit*. While profoundly disturbing, anti-Semitic statements by mainstream politicians like Jürgen Möllemann and Martin Hohman, electoral successes of extreme right, xenophobic political parties, and anti-Semitic violence are the exceptions rather than the rule.

LEADERSHIP

The policy and institutional connections between German and Israeli governments, that know no limits today, have not always been popular: the opposition to the 1952 Reparations Agreement; the 1950s and 1960s concerns about the weapons relationship; the

1970s, 1980s, and 1990s calls for a downgrading of the special relationship politically; and the continuation into this millennium of sharp criticism of the German government being too close to Israel on policy toward the Palestinians. However, there was always in both countries steady and visionary leadership who could act decisively and with a long-term perspective to negotiate the shoals of disaffection and sustain the vibrancy of the relationship. Throughout the life of the relationship, reconciliation has been authenticated through the weathering of crises.

In addition to individuals, there were leadership duos whose personal chemistry and rapport lubricated relations at difficult junctures: Konrad Adenauer and David Ben-Gurion, Willy Brandt and Golda Meir, Shimon Peres and Franz-Josef Strauss, Joschka Fischer and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon (despite very different ideological origins). One could also note the warm and friendly interactions between Chancellor Angela Merkel and Ehud Olmert on her trips to Israel.

SOCIETAL INTERACTIONS

Societal organizations dealing with history were essential at the beginning of German-Israeli relations, and non-governmental actors have remained significant thereafter. The range of connections between the two societies has been broad: trade unions, political parties, friendship associations, cultural groups, youth exchange, twinning of cities, chambers of commerce, higher education, and political foundations. At times of crisis in the relationship, for example in the Gulf War and during the second intifadah, these groups have shown solidarity with Israel.

The positive societal links do not mean that there have not been negative views in the broader society in Germany concerning Israel. An EU poll in 2003 showed that 65 percent of Germans thought Israel was a threat to world peace (ahead of Iran, North Korea, and Iraq). Not all criticism of Israel is anti-Semitic, but a major investigation by Bielefeld University did find an anti-Semitic bias for some attitudes to Israel. Polls undertaken by Emnid in Germany in 2006 and 2007 revealed that around 50 percent

of respondents felt Germany had no special responsibility toward Israel. In the final analysis, however, the panoramic view provided by societal institutions, rather than the snap-shot image proffered by opinion polls, is much more telling.

INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The final reason that German-Israeli relations were able to develop so fully resides in the international context surrounding the improbable partnership. Three areas have been important: the role of the U.S.; the fact of the Cold War; and the framework of the European Union.

From the time of the reparations agreement through Germany's supply of weapons to Israel, to the current reality that of all the European countries Germany's Middle East policy most closely resembles the American approach, the U.S. has actively encouraged German-Israeli ties. Regarding the European community, Germany has repeatedly and steadfastly been an advocate of Israel's economic interests, for example, the various free trade arrangements and agreements starting in 1970 through today, and of Israeli access to various technical programs of the EU. More recently Germany has engaged in the political sphere on Israel's behalf, for example Israel's "special status" granted by the 1994 Essen summit, and the EU-Action Plan of 2004, despite pressure from some EU colleagues to move in a different direction. Israel frequently acknowledges Germany's advocacy of Israeli interests in European integration. The Cold War helped Germany and Israel to draw together politically and militarily, but détente and the ultimate unraveling of the Soviet bloc meant Israel no longer had to deal with a hostile GDR that actively and rhetorically supported Israel's enemies.

Conclusion

Many years ago, Israel's first Prime Minister David Ben Gurion noted that "In Israel, in order to be a realist you must believe in miracles."⁹ In May 2005, the foreign ministers of Germany and Israel, writing together on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of diplomatic relations, echoed Ben Gurion's statement

with respect to German-Israeli relations, and Chancellor Merkel repeated it at the end of her Knesset speech. As this essay has tried to demonstrate, albeit in a telescopic way, it has indeed been a remarkable journey that has brought the two countries from the depths of enmity to the heights of friendship, amity, and trust.

If "special" means a duality—of the indelible moral imprint of history and the pragmatic fashioning of preferential policies thereafter—then indeed Germany and Israel have a *Sonderverhältnis*. But what of the future? Chancellor Merkel addressed the next stage in her March 2008 speech to the Knesset by asking about operationalizing the term.

"We often say that Germany and Israel are linked by a special, unique relationship. But what precisely is meant by this "unique relationship"? Is my country aware of the import of these words—not just when repeated in speeches and at ceremonial events but also when deeds are called for?¹⁰

Both sides have recognized that the responsibility for the perpetuation of this duality lies with the youth of the two countries. Accordingly, in stating that bilateral cooperation "shall successfully shape the handover of relations to future generations," the German-Israeli communiqué from the March 2008 joint session of the German and Israeli cabinets announced the creation of a German-Israeli Future Forum.¹¹ Young Germans and Israelis will meet regularly to develop joint, future-oriented projects in the fields of culture, economics, science, and the media. While young leaders in both countries have strong foundations on which to build, they face enormous twin challenges to the special relationship: the passing of the Holocaust generation; and the entrenchment of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict susceptible less to solution than to management.

NOTES

1 For details on the early period, see Lily Gardner Feldman, *The Special Relationship between West Germany and Israel* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1984).

2 On the recent past in German-Israeli relations, see Yves Pallade, *Germany and Israel in the 1990s and Beyond: Still a "Special Relationship"?* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2005); and Helen Bartos, *Israeli-German Relations in the Years 2000-2006: A Special Relationship Revisited*, Master's thesis, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, 2007, <<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~metheses/Bartos%20thesis.pdf>>.

3 For President Köhler's speech in German see <http://www.bundespraesident.de?_2.622155/Ansprache-von-Bundespraesident.htm> (4 February 2005). The speech is also available in English at the Israeli Foreign Ministry website, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2005/German+President+K%C3%B6hler+address=Knesset...> (3 March 2005). For Sharon's speech to the Knesset welcoming Köhler see <<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Government/Speeches+by+Israeli+leaders/2005/PM+Sharon=Knesset+speech+on+visit>>.

4 Lily Gardner Feldman, "Germany's 'Special Relationship' with Israel Continues, Despite Appearances to the Contrary," AICGS Advisor, 6 May 2004, <<http://www.aicgs.org/analysis/c/feldmanc.aspx>>.

5 "Israel Approves Prisoner Exchange," *BBC News*, 29 June 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/7480044.stm>.

6 See, for example, Silvan Shalom and Joschka Fischer, "Deutschland und Israel – Partnerschaft für die Zukunft," "Israel and Germany, a 40-Year Friendship," an article that appeared simultaneously in *Haaretz* and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 18 May 2005.

7 Lily Gardner Feldman, "Germany's celebration of Israel at Sixty: A Skillful Blend of Old and New," AICGS Advisor, 4 April 2008, <<http://www.aicgs.org/analysis/c/igf040408.aspx>>.

8 See <<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Foreign+Relations/Bilateral+relations/Special+Knesset+session+in+honor+of+German+Chancellor+Angela+Merkel+18-Mar-2008.htm>>.

9 Interview on CBS, 5 October 1956.

10 See Presse-und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, "Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel vor der Knesset am Dienstag, 18. März 2008, in Jerusalem, Pressemitteilung, no. 92/08, March 18, 1008.

11 See <<http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2008/03/Anlagen/2008-3-17-communique-deutsch-israelische-regierungskoalitionen,property=publicationFile.pdf>>.

A COMMON PAST IS NOT A SHARED MEMORY: THE BUBIS-WALSER DEBATE REVISITED

MICHAEL BRENNER

The Debate

Jews and Germans face a common past, but not a shared memory. Blurring this distinction leads to significant misunderstandings, as a number of debates during the last decade made clear. Most prominent among them was the debate between the writer Martin Walser and Ignatz Bubis, the President of Germany's Central Council of Jews, in 1998. While Walser complained in his acceptance speech for Germany's most prestigious literary award, the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, about the endless repetition of depicting the German "shame," Bubis questioned any minimizing of this part of German history.

The debate became more complex when the former mayor of Hamburg, Klaus von Dohnanyi, asked if the Jews would not have been perpetrators themselves, had the Nazis not been anti-Semites. To be sure, Dohnanyi's father was executed as part of the resistance against Hitler, which represents the "other" Germany. However, this kind of statement lies at the core of turning a common past into a shared memory—at least a hypothetically shared memory—in which anyone could have been a perpetrator and anyone could have been a victim. Thus, the logical continuation of the argument was immediately spelled out by Dohnanyi: "We are vulnerable, too." We, here, stood for the (non-Jewish) German. Martin Walser went one step further in the next round of this battle, telling the Holocaust survivor Bubis that he, Walser, dealt with "those topics" long before Bubis did.

Outside Germany many observers wondered why this debate was so emotionally charged, and why such debates occurred with some frequency. Beginning with the Historians Debate in the mid-1980s, those

discussions reached their climax in the 1990s, with topics like the Goldhagen book, the Wehrmacht exhibit, the Finkelstein controversy, and the endless debates about the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin. Is it only because the generation of people directly involved is dying out, as some observers claim? There are certainly other factors involved, and I would like to point out one of them.

The Development and Decline of Consensus

The effects of 1968 gradually established a new consensus in German society for the immediate postwar generation; the enormous impact of the TV miniseries *Holocaust* played the same role for a younger generation a decade later. By then the first postwar decades, a period described so aptly by Norbert Frei in his book *Vergangenheitspolitik*, came to an end, and a new period of facing the past seriously began to dominate public life. Aleida Assmann, in her work about cultural memory, distinguishes between a society of shame, which dominated the Germany of the postwar period and a society of guilt, which perhaps culminated with the 1985 speech of then-President Richard von Weizsäcker and his use of the Hasidic saying, "Redemption through Memory," used over and over again since then.

German Jews, as well as many other Germans, believed this consensus of seriously facing the past to be a long-term base on which to build a modern German society, a model for a society looking back toward its own crimes. The initiative of building a Holocaust Memorial, which also originated in the 1980s, was perhaps the most radical expression of this new attitude. It is an initiative without any precedent: a society builds a monument not for its own war

victims, but for the victims of its own crimes. At least since the 1980s, for many German Jews and for others, this consensus seemed so self-evident that they could not imagine that any respected German public figure would disagree on this commonly accepted outlook toward the past. To condemn anti-Semitism, to pay tribute to the uniqueness of the Nazi crimes, and to continue to cope with the Nazi past as in the last two decades was a given—and there were certain rules how to do it. When one violated them, as the former Bundestag Speaker Philipp Jenninger did in his speech of 8 November 1988, there was a clear mechanism: one had to resign. A decade later this had changed significantly. What Martin Walser said was clearly much more poignant than the unfortunate remarks of Jenninger a decade before, but there was no lack of prominent defenders of Walser, who continued to be one of the most celebrated German writers even after the debate became rather emotional.

Others Join the Debate

Rudolf Augstein, the editor of the influential German weekly, *Der Spiegel*, played an important role in these debates and deserves some attention in this context. His comment on the Walser Debate and the planned Holocaust Memorial was a central piece in a developing new consensus of the 1990s, as a reaction to the older attempts of coping with the German past. It was left to Augstein to spell out what Martin Walser had only paraphrased: "One cannot dictate to us from outside the country how we build our new capital in memory of the past," he writes.¹ One wonders for a moment: who is dictating what from outside? Was the Holocaust Memorial not a very German initiative? After all, it was a truly German *Bürgerinitiative* (citizens' initiative) with the special interest of the Christian-Democratic Chancellor Helmut Kohl. But not enough for Augstein: German Jews should stay out of the debate altogether. Bubis is too "biased," Michel Friedman (another spokesman for the Jewish community) "isn't the right person," and even Professor Michael Wolffsohn from the University of the German Armed Forces, who rushed to demand Bubis' resignation, was not left out by Augstein, who disqualified him from participating in the Walser

debate by questioning his literary knowledge.

At the end, Augstein happily stated that finally all taboos are broken. All taboos? Not really, if one reads Augstein's text. He still believed he needed to use code words to denounce American Jews. He did not mention the word Jew once, but everyone knew who was meant when he spoke about "the New York Press" and the "sharks in lawyers' robes."² When he really used the term Jews, he preferred to quote Konrad Adenauer who allegedly said: "*Das Weltjudentum ist eine große Macht*" ("World Jewry is a great power").³

Germans as Victims?

It is the Germans who emerge in Walser's, Dohnanyi's, and Augstein's statements (all of the same generation) as vulnerable (*verletzbar*), as the real victims. Augstein even goes so far to claim that if the Holocaust Memorial were to be realized, his fellow Germans would be totally flogged by the world press "every year and lifelong" ("*Prügel der Weltpresse jedes Jahr und lebenslang, und das bis ins siebte Glied*"). Hardly a pleasant vision for a vulnerable nation.

In an annual lecture honoring the anti-Nazi White Rose resistance movement at Munich University, Klaus von Dohnanyi made a quite interesting appeal: one should rather build a monument to German resistance fighters! Such a monument could never be called a "monumentalization" of German shame by Martin Walser, but would be a tribute to German courage. Only a few years earlier, Martin Walser had delivered a speech honoring Victor Klemperer at the same place, when Klemperer was posthumously awarded the Geschwister-Scholl Award. As the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* wrote already then, unfortunately the dead cannot choose their laudatory speakers. In this speech, Walser made clear a very crucial distinction, which also emerged in his 1998 speech. There are the good Jews, like Klemperer, who converted to Christianity before World War I and who was part of the most assimilated segment of German Jewry; then there were the rather negative examples, and Walser mentioned explicitly Gershom

Scholem, who never believed in a German-Jewish symbiosis. As flawed as these distinctions may be, they are well accepted by the German public. It was not by chance that it was Augstein's *Spiegel*, which published Walser's speech on Klemperer.

NOTES

1 *Der Spiegel*, 30 November 1998.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

Normalcy in a New Europe?

Where are we now, a decade later, with respect to German-Jewish relations? Certainly not—where many wish to be—at a point of normalcy. At the same time, however, one can also see those debates as the final expression of a process in which, on the one hand, survivors are still actively engaged and are finally overcoming a long period of speechlessness, and on the other hand, as the culmination of the encounter of the generation of 1968 with their parents' past. The younger generation today does not have much use for either the shame or the guilt society. It would be a grave mistake to continue to apply those two terms to a generation growing up in the twenty-first century. Responsibility for one's own past is a more useful term.

Finally, it is indeed important what happened in the meantime within the Jewish community of Germany, which has been transformed by a massive immigration of Russian Jews and by a growing diversification of its religious institutions. I would like to end on an optimistic note related to the European dimension. Germany will hopefully be part of a new Europe; and Jews in Germany—who often hesitated many years after living in Germany before they applied for a German passport—will more easily say that they are European Jews. Even more than in other European countries, the future of German Jewry is closely tied to the success of the experiment of European integration. For German Jews the vision of a newly formed European Jewish identity looks especially attractive. To identify as European rather than as German, Jews would enable themselves to identify with a promising future rather than with a bleak past.

ARE GERMAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS STILL "SPECIAL"?

PERCEPTIONS, IMAGES, AND THE ROLE OF VISUAL CULTURE IN GERMAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS

FRANK STERN

Introduction

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, perceptions and images of Israel and Germany have been imprinted on the popular mind in both countries through television, film, and digital media. The messages transported by visual media are highly influenced by ideologies, mainstream orientations, political interests, and media competition. Given the free market of images and their interpretation it is obvious that the transfer of popular images is by no means streamlined but antagonistic, influenced by historical consciousness, long-lasting mentalities, and the perceptions of current political, economic, and military developments.

The German-Israeli special relationship may be an asset of the political class in both countries, but it may not represent shared opinions when it comes to younger generations or those who live in a cultural and social distance to political decision-making and official policy declarations. However, in the long run popular sentiment and attitudes have an impact on political decision-making, something we have to take into account when it comes to historical consciousness and the factual interrelations of moral and interest-related justifications for political positions.

A Flash Back

Both mainstream anti-Semitism until 1945 and ordained philo-Semitism after 1948 played an important role in shaping the West German official attitude toward Israel. A rejection of everything German on the Israeli side was combined with the development of secret German-Israeli cooperation on the economic

and security levels. The references to the Holocaust were from the very start related to interests. On the German side, the purpose was to change moral attitudes of a majority, or at least a part of it, and to change the German image in the international arena by becoming a responsible player in the Cold War scenario. On the Israeli side, the main goal was to overcome financially and internationally the deep crisis of the evolving national project implying from its very start a European-Middle East security and military option with the Holocaust as a central point of legitimization. In other words, German-Israeli relations were interest-oriented from the very start but defined in historical and moral terms by the Holocaust. From today's perspective this is indeed a deep-rooted special relationship.

Changing Perceptions of the Past

Today, we know a lot about the consequences of the political and cultural post-war fact noted above. We understand its implications, its crises; and we recognize its lasting impact on public discourse, on the politics of official commemoration, on education and culture, and on the evolving post-war mentalities in both countries. Israeli and German historical consciousness are almost inseparably intertwined. However, we also can observe transitions, shifts, different impacts, and different meanings in various parts of the populations.

A few years ago it seemed that the impact of the Holocaust was dwindling. We can identify at least four changes. First, there was the biological generational change, with the eye-witnesses to the Holocaust on both sides of the concentration camps'

barbed wire fading away. The transmission of personal experience, of telling one's horrifying experience or one's tacit integration into a democratic society, gave way to cultural and ritualized remembrance, and the Holocaust became a question of cultural memory, institutions, museums, *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory), and communicative narratives.

Second, a growing gap could be felt between the public and the private spheres, between the cognitive and the emotional layers in Shoah remembrance. Silences and rejections, commercializations and relativizations, revisionism and Shoah-oriented identity-building were topics in various spheres of political culture. Political correctness about the Holocaust was countered by open rejection of any special responsibility, a move in Germany that was one of the consequences of the slogan "the grace of being born late" (*Gnade der späten Geburt*: Chancellor Kohl's 1984 formulation, in Israel, to identify himself with post-war, rather than Third Reich, Germany).

Third, this era of change was a period of erosion regarding certain dogmas in public dealings with the Holocaust. At the same time, there was an evolving focus on universal questions of individual and collective responsibilities. The singularity of the Shoah became a paradigm for debates on genocide and crimes against humanity in general. Fighting anti-Semitism became topped by various forms of fighting Holocaust denial and fighting the denial of Israel's right to exist.

Fourth, in both Germany and Israel, one could discern failures in Holocaust education. Dogmatic approaches and political instrumentalizations questioned the ethical impact of the Shoah for future generations. There had always been a political dimension to facing the past but now it became an issue of party politics and politicized, as reflected in speeches by politicians and the growing criticism of what is called today "Shoah tourism."

New Approaches to the Past

The more critical stances toward the past do not

describe the whole picture. Increasingly we observe developments in a more constructive direction. For example, in Germany, in other European countries, and in North America, innovative approaches to Holocaust Studies reach out to new generations, ethnic groups, and educators. The struggle against anti-Semitism today includes institutional and cultural activities against racism in general and against the denial of the right of Israel to exist in safe borders. The deep intensification of oral history projects has led to a new understanding of the diversity among both victims and perpetrators. Holocaust remembrance is once again personalized, individualized, and seen as a rational cultural and educational legacy with a very strong inroad into national identity.

A few years ago, there was the firm conviction in fields of higher learning, education, and literary and cinematic production, that Jewish topics and the Holocaust do not sell. Although German universities still have some way to go in the establishment of Jewish and Holocaust Studies, it is clear that via other areas, such as the media, film, and literature, students are confronted with the challenges posed by the Holocaust. Attitudes and perspectives on the Shoah have increasingly become part of popular culture. The same holds true for Israel where Shoah paradigms become more and more integrated in films, theater, and literature produced by a younger generation. However, this development is less related to Germany as "the other" (as Martin Buber would put it) or Israel as the "other" for young Germans.

The expanding ethical and connotational references in Germany to the Shoah have more to do with individual quests and the search for roots, with national identity and history involving German unification and GDR history. In Israel, one can clearly see the implications of the Intifada, terrorism, and wars being dealt with in cultural representations under a creative and strong impact of lessons drawn from the Shoah. Udi Aloni's film *Forgiveness* or Amos Gitai's *Free Zone* with Natalie Portman are examples of this trend. In a broader cultural context, the German film *Goodbye Lenin* was a success in Israel, and a retrospective of East German DEFA films (particularly Konrad Wolf's Jewish trilogy) attracted a huge audience in the major

Israeli cities. Israeli films like *Broken Wings* or *The Band's Visit* or *Close to Home*, about young female Israeli soldiers, draws German and Austrian crowds in urban centers. The specific way that the Shoah is integrated into many fields of cultural production and artistic representation may not appeal to older generations or some critics, but it does appeal to those who will have to decide on the future of any kind of special relationship.

The Past in the Future

Be it in Germany, Austria, or Israel, it is obvious that the old sermon-like rituals of German-Israeli relations in politics and diplomacy are outdated. Today these relations and the built-in role of the Holocaust cannot be seen as isolated foci of national identity. For the twenty-first century, the special relationship and the Holocaust are combined or modernized with gender-related issues, with the fate of other persecuted groups like the Sinti and Roma, and with renewed debates on the current growth of anti-Semitism and racism. New German films like *Dann Kommen die Touristen* about a young German today confronting the former camp Auschwitz-Birkenau and a survivor who works there, and Israeli films like *Made in Israel* or *Forgiveness* relate Shoah topics to contemporary ethical, political, and cultural problems in a way that has a deep-rooted perspective and cultural potential.

The role of Holocaust remembrance in German and Israeli national identity will depend on the cultural and mental integration of Holocaust topics, but they may not be the same as fifty years ago. National divergences in Holocaust references can imply controversial debates and different agendas in national discourse. We are well advised not to impose streamlined definitions on such debates, particularly when it comes to the European and to the Palestinian questions that are increasingly dealt with in high and popular culture, the arts, and particularly film.

In Israel and in Germany the impact of the Holocaust will persist only if its contents are foreshadowing for the future. Culture and mentalities will include the Holocaust as a self-understood part of historical and cultural consciousness only when more efforts are

undertaken to promote active and innovative forms of Shoah remembrance. This process will imply forgetting and remembering at the same time. As it is said in Deuteronomy 24, 19: Therefore, when the Lord... grants you safety from all your enemies around you, in the land that the Lord... is giving you as a hereditary portion, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget! - Lo Tischkach!

In short, hopefully the special relationship will increasingly become a special German and Israeli way of remembering the Holocaust that is not reduced only to its universal meaning but keeps its singular relevance for both nations and includes forms of forgetting. In addition, if Germany becomes the gateway into Europe for Israel we may have to observe new dimensions of this special relationship—however it will be differently modelled along the lines of early twenty-first century common interests, such as common market strategies, the Iraq military complex, and global technologies.

Finally, this future scenario of remembering and forgetting involves a new player on the political and cultural map as one of the results of the fall of communism: a growing European Jewish identity. This dynamic entails a revival among the old and new Jewish communities and the rise of a new generation of European Jewish leaders, particularly in central Europe with a strong representation of women atop the nascent, diversified Jewish elite. Both Israeli and American cultures will have an impact on this new European Jewish elite. The common denominator will oscillate between religion, newly developing traditions, and regional and international Jewish culture. In short, as much as the Shoah and its consequences will remain central for the German-Israeli relationship with all the shifts implied, it will—although deeply integrated—not be central for the newly developing cultural and traditional identities in central Europe.

AICGS

1755 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036 – USA
T: (+1-202) 332-9312
F: (+1-202) 265-9531
E: info@aicgs.org
www.aicgs.org

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