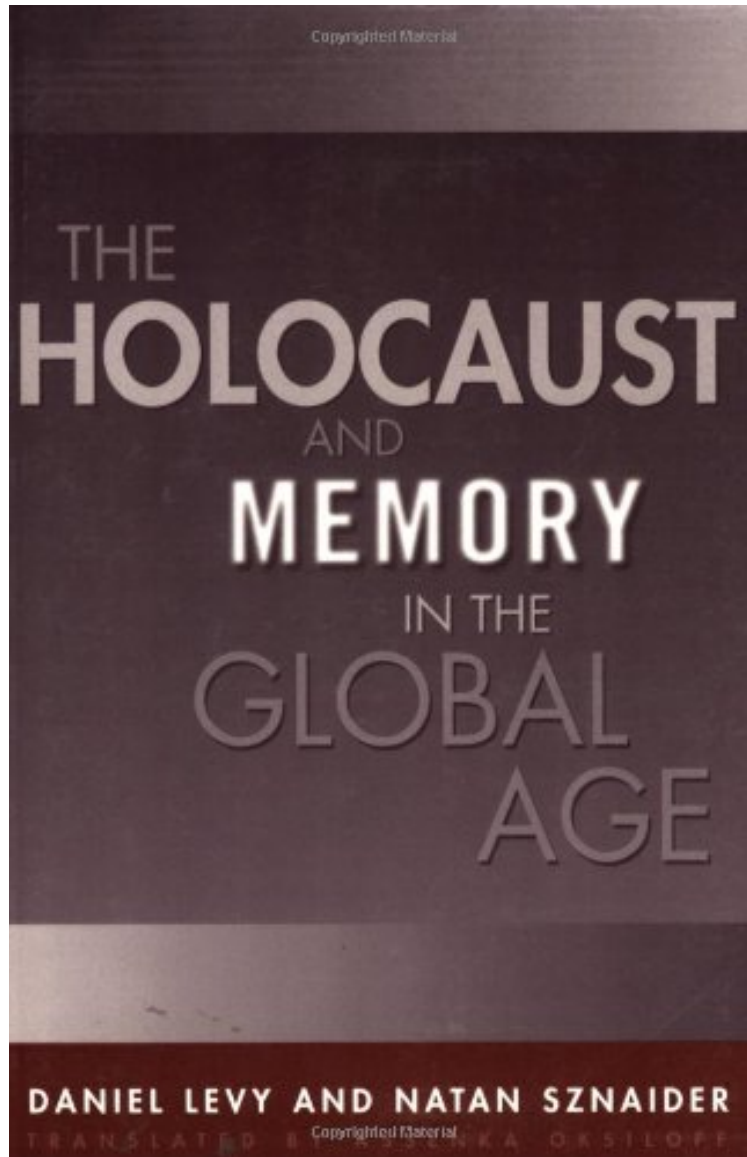


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Holocaust And Memory In The Global Age (Politics History Social Chan)

Daniel Levy, Natan Sznaider

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Daniel Levy, Natan Sznaider : Holocaust And Memory In The Global Age (Politics History Social Chan) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Holocaust And Memory In The Global Age (Politics History Social Chan):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Newfangled Forms of Holocaust Supremacism (Part 1), and New

Forms of Retreat From German Responsibility (Part 2) By Jan Peczkis This book can be divided into two main themes, and my review is thus divided accordingly:-----PART i of ii. Consider the preeminence of the Judeocentrically-defined Holocaust over the genocides of all other peoples, especially its most modern form that of the Holocaust being arrogated the moral lighthouse of all humankind, and the Holocaust being arrogated the gatekeeper to all non-Jewish genocides. BEFORE THE ADVENT OF HOLOCAUST SUPREMACISM After WWII, when sanity prevailed, all the Nazi German crimes were kept in proper perspective and recognition, and there was no dividing of the dead. The authors thus discuss the Nuremberg trials, The verdicts total 226 pages, of which only three deal with the annihilation of the Jews (p. 58). Now consider the 1950s USA. The authors quip, Americans cultivated an image of the Holocaust that highlighted the diversity of the victims. (p. 90). So, at one time, all the victims of the Germans were equally recognized. Imagine that! What became known as the Holocaust or Shoah did not rule even in the new Jewish state. Levy and Sznajder write, Through the end of the 1950s, the Holocaust was not acknowledged as a unique historical event in public consciousness or historical thought in Israel. (p. 88). JEWISH INFLUENCE AND HOLOCAUST SUPREMACY At the risk of belaboring the obvious, Levy and Sznajder are candid about the origins of the elevation of the Holocaust over all other genocides, Holocaust remembrance is marked by various taboos in different countries. Nevertheless, it is no coincidence that the memory of the Holocaust is playing an increasingly central role in a transnational, global arena. As we have noted, Jews, or more specifically, their media representations, are the most important carriers indeed, the very personification of cosmopolitan memories. (pp. 198-199). HOLOCAUST SUPREMACY BEGAN WITH AN ORWELLIAN PROCESS OF RESHAPING LANGUAGE Those who control the discourse control the narrative, and this begins with the control of the language. After all, the control of the language is key to the control of how people think as shown long ago by George Orwell's 1984. The authors, probably inadvertently, allude to this, The clearest sign that the Holocaust is unique is that it has its own name. There is the Holocaust, then there are all the other massacres. People can argue all they want about how theoretically this is not true, but as long as they use the word as long as no other massacre gets its own word they are designating the Holocaust as unique. THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE THAT IS LANGUAGE CONSTRAINS THEM TO DO SO. If they use another term, they will just have to explain that they are actually referring to the Holocaust. The clearest sign that the Holocaust is sacred is that using that term lightly can give offense In other words, the Holocaust is surrounded by taboos, and taboos provide insight into the dominant culture of a society. (p. 52; Emphasis added). No kidding. Language rules. No wonder that Jews fought so furiously against inclusion of the Nazi German murder of Poles or Gypsies under the term Holocaust! They successfully monopolized this term in a narrow Judeocentric sense, and that is why we now are stuck with the Orwellian-constructed phrase of the Holocaust and other victims of the Nazis. Furthermore, the non-Jewish victims of the Nazis, when mentioned at all, generally must use Holocaust-deferential terminology if they hope to be heard (e. g, the Gypsy Holocaust, the Polish Holocaust [sometimes facetiously called the Polocaust or the Polonocaust], and, more recently, the Kosovocaust of 1998-1999. (p. 165)]. Of course, having a special name for one's genocide is not enough. After all, we have the Aghet (Armenians), Porajmos (Sinti and Roma), and Holodomor (Ukrainians). However, owing to the fact that non-Jews have lacked the influence to promote public awareness of their genocides, their impact has been almost as negligible as public awareness of these special names. (For evidence, see comments). THE MYSTIFICATION OF THE HOLOCAUST The Holocaust has now assumed the self-appointed role of global moral lighthouse. Levy and Sznajder quip, The Holocaust has become a moral certainty that now stretches across national borders and unites Europe and other parts of the world. (p. 18). Wow. Says who? Even more grandiose is the following, Along the way, the Holocaust is reaffirmed as the touchstone for a disoriented, de-territorialized humanity searching for moral clarity amid constant uncertainty. (p. 24). Oh, really? NEWFANGLED HOLOCAUST SUPREMACISM: NOW AN ORWELLIAN STAND-IN FOR ALL OTHER GENOCIDES The Holocaust rules over all other genocides in subtle as well as obvious ways. Authors Levy and Sznajder state that, At the U. S. Holocaust Museum in Washington, D. C. [USHMM], the Holocaust experience of the Jewish victims serves as a symbol for victims in general. (p. 13). Who decreed that this is so? The foregoing can be generalized. The authors comment, The Holocaust is now a concept that been dislocated from space and time, resulting in its inscription into other acts of injustice and other traumatic memories across the globe. (p. 5). Furthermore, according to Levy and Sznajder, we do indeed have a Cult of the Holocaust, Human rights and their violation create a moral space in which there is no longer an uncertainty. The oppressed must be innocent and the oppressors evil, A GLOBAL CIVIL RELIGION in which Jews and Nazis serve as the basic prototypes. (p. 193; Emphasis added). We certainly live in a very interesting world. When did the human race ever vote its acceptance of this self-appointed privileged genocide-gatekeeper status for the Holocaust? THE SO-CALLED UNIVERSALITY OF THE HOLOCAUST IS A SMOKE SCREEN Rhetorical disguises aside, nothing has changed. Despite all the talk of universalizing the Holocaust, the same Judeocentric mindset about its peerless nature remains in force. The authors candidly state that, Often the uniqueness of the Holocaust means that it could and should not be compared to other events. (p. 132). They give away the store by disclosing their own position, It is correct to insist that the Holocaust is singular and that comparisons to other atrocities need to proceed from this premise. (p. 161). In addition, Israelis are often admonished not to universalize the Holocaust, and they have treated it as a

traumatic event in Jewish history that cannot be used to draw universal lessons. (p. 171). The various Holocaust-related controversies are sideshows. They do not change the foregoing narrative. The authors write, In contrast to those who abhor the universalizing and commercializing of the Holocaust, we view this process as a vital contribution to the development of a cosmopolitan memory. (p. 137).

THE JEWISH--NOT POLISH--MONOPOLIZATION OF AUSCHWITZ Levy and Sznajder repeat the canard that Poles tried to appropriate the memory of Auschwitz. (p. 167). It is the other way around. Fact is, Poles at no time avoided the fact that Jews, as Jews, had been victims of the Nazis. See comments. What Jews dislike is Poles bringing up the fact that Poles were also victims at Auschwitz. It does not fit the standard narrative.

-----PART ii of ii. **INTRODUCTION TO THE ONGOING DILUTION OF GERMAN GUILT FOR THE HOLOCAUST** The displacement of guilt away from the Germans takes on many forms. For instance, the informed reviewer can think of the frequent media mendacity about Polish death camps and the increasingly German-less Holocaust in Eastern Europe (e. g, the much-ballyhooed Jedwabne revelation started by neo-Stalinist Jan T. Gross). However, guilt-displacement away from the Germans need not be so frank. Instead, and whether or not done intentionally to benefit the Germans politically and/or to make it easier to blame other nations (notably Poland) for the Holocaust, German-guilt-displacement is often subtle.

THE DE-GERMANIZATION OF THE NAZIS IN ACTION The move to whitewash the Germans began with the construction of a contrived dichotomy between Nazis and Germans. Authors Levy and Sznajder allude to this, In Germany, by contrast, numerous politicians and other public officials recognized that Germany (but, notably, not the Germans) had to take responsibility for the concentration camps. They managed quite well, however, to distance themselves from what had actually happened. Making the distinction between regular Germans and Nazis and using the designation crimes in the name of Germany were useful in this respect. (p. 60). They certainly were. The authors make this German-guilt-evasion even more explicit as they write, Various distancing mechanisms were disseminated through the language of public discourses (Olick 1993). For one thing, Germans could push responsibility for the Holocaust onto a small group of Nazis who had committed criminal acts in the name of Germany. (p. 72).

DE-GERMANIZATION OF THE NAZIS AND NOW THE DE-NAZIFICATION OF THE NAZI There has been a further initiative to spread the guilt around for the Holocaust. The authors summarize it well, In this view, the mass murder of European Jews by the Nazis is regarded not as a German-Jewish tragedy but as a tragedy of reason or of modernity itself. (Adorno and Horkheimer 1999 [1944]; Arendt 1992 [1963]; Bauman 1989) Hence it is precisely the **ABSTRACT** nature of good and evil that symbolizes the Holocaust, which contributes to the extraterritorial quality of cosmopolitan memory. (p. 4; Emphasis added). The more abstract the Holocaust is, the less the guilt of the Germans. Levy and Sznajder add that, Memories of the Holocaust revolve around the dichotomy of particularism and universalism. [Reviewers editorial comment: Note the Orwellian Holocaustspeak.] Was the Holocaust a Jewish catastrophe with German perpetrators, or was it a universal catastrophe, a breakdown of civilization or modernity? (p. 7). The fact that such a question is even asked is, by itself, a soft-peddling of German guilt. It is like the leftist who exculpates the criminal by trying to convince us that the problem lies not with the criminal, but with society in general.

In *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder examine the distinctive forms that collective memory take in the age of globalisation. Levy and Sznajder examine the way the Holocaust has been remembered in Germany, Israel, and the US during the last fifty years, and show how this singular event has been detached from its precise context and instead used as a way of focusing abstract questions of good and evil, and how this use has given the Holocaust a resonance across the global stage, as responses to other injustices like ethnic cleansing in Bosnia have depended on a collective understanding of the Holocaust to justify such actions.

"This translation makes a highly original contribution to holocaust, human rights, and globalization scholarship. Levy and Sznajder's rich comparative and historical analysis of responses to the Holocaust over time yields significant theoretical insights, which illuminate how memory culture is being constructed and diffused in an increasingly global world, and persuasively argues for its importance in laying a basis for cosmopolitan identity."-Ruti Teitel, Ernst C. Stiefel Professor of Comparative Law, New York Law School, and author of *Transitional Justice* "The authors have provided an excellent and insightful analysis of the way the Holocaust provides a core for modern society and a catalyst for a globalized human rights culture that privileges the identity of victims as a form for redressing their suffering."-Elazar Barkan, Professor of History and Cultural Studies, Claremont Graduate University "The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age by Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder is the definitive study of the Shoah in our new, global world. The authors analyze the Holocaust as a key to our understanding the construction of collective memory in a world driven by media. They examine the claims of the competing cultural uses of the Holocaust in film, popular history, and high theory, from Spielberg to Goldhagen to Bauman, and beyond. This is an important book not only because of the subtlety and intelligence of the authors, but because they take seriously the implications of using the Holocaust to pattern our own understanding of events in the twenty-first century."-Sander L. Gilman, Weidenfeld Professor of European Comparative Literature, St. Anne's College / Oxford "Levy and Sznajder successfully demonstrate why 'holocaust' is no longer an exclusively Jewish or German concern. Their treatment of how the

Holocaust is remembered, taught, memorialized, studied, and incorporated into law and policy in each of the three countries [Israel, Germany, and the US] as well as internationally is empirically rich and informative. Their larger argument about the decoupling of collective memory from national boundaries and the emergence of cosmopolitan meanings and concern is ingenious."-David Abraham, University of Miami School of Law

From the Publisher

How collective memory of the Holocaust advances human rights in the Global Age

From the Back Cover

"Levy and Sznajder successfully demonstrate why 'holocaust' is no longer an exclusively Jewish or German concern. Their treatment of how the Holocaust is remembered, taught, memorialized, studied, and incorporated into law and policy in each of the three countries [Israel, Germany, and the US] as well as internationally is empirically rich and informative. Their larger argument about the decoupling of collective memory from national boundaries and the emergence of cosmopolitan meanings and concern is ingenious." David Abraham, University of Miami School of Law