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John Authers, Richard Wolffe
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John Authers, Richard Wolffe : The Victim's Fortune: Inside the Epic Battle over the Debts of the Holocaust before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Victim's Fortune: Inside the Epic Battle over the Debts of the Holocaust:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. UnbiasedBy Zilina This is an excellent investigative and thorough book. It is a very sensitive and emotional subject that has been treated by the authors with tact. John Authers and

Richard Wolffe have done an excellent job at remaining unbiased and even handed which cannot be said for some of the other books on the same subject. 0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Disappointing
By Charles M. Wyzanski
This topic is fascinating but deserves a thorough historical and analytical treatment, not a series of often disjointed anecdotes and descriptions of personalities of the moment. I expected more from reporters of the Financial Times. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. An epic account of an epic struggle
By Walter Snurd
The publisher says "John Authers and Richard Wolffe offer a spellbinding investigative account" of the international struggle to retrieve some of the debts owed to Holocaust victims for more than half a century by bankers, insurers and industrial executives. I rarely agree with a publisher's endorsement of a book but in the case of "The Victim's Fortune" I can only agree with the judgement. The authors meticulously give their sources for what participants say and do, and, by having visited many of the major protagonists are able to sketch accurate and very lively pen-pictures not only of people but of locations: there are 45 pages of notes and sources and a full index - the general reader may not need them but they are there to reinforce the veracity of the account. It would have been easy to have been less than even-handed to some of the powerful characters encountered in the book: it is a tribute to the authors that they maintain an even keel while charting the reader through a variety of events which could easily have seemed an incoherent maelstrom. The story starts in 1995 and culminates in June 2001 when payments of \$5000 begin to be made to the dwindling band of Holocaust survivors. The six years saw the involvement of a swathe of characters, from Jewish leaders, lawyers, bankers, insurers, judges, to President Clinton and Christoph Meili, a security guard at UBS who found in the course of his patrol that key documents had been put ready in the shredding room. In return for his whistle-blowing he had to flee his native Switzerland when he received death threats and warnings that his children would be kidnapped, and make a home in USA, the first Swiss citizen ever to seek asylum there on grounds of political persecution. It is a roller-coaster of a book with new, well-defined and important characters arriving in most chapters. It is a fascinating read both for the issues involved and the egos on display. I have only had time to read the book once and will certainly do so again. It is no exaggeration to refer to the epic battle over the debts of the Holocaust: I am profoundly grateful to the authors for opening my eyes to the reality of how deals get made, who truly benefits in such a tangled web. Lawyers, companies, governments even, had their own agenda: the payment was too little, too late; to quote one former slave-labourer "if it had been earlier or larger, it would have been no more moral". This book is a triumph and deserves to be widely read.

Fifty years after World War II, a small group of Americans launched a campaign to confront the world with the fact that many assets looted by the Nazis had never been returned to their owners. Backed by class-action lawsuits and threats of economic sanctions, they mounted a vigorous challenge against some of the world's largest corporations and governments to demand billions of dollars. But what began as a moral crusade soon became a bare-knuckle battle that opened up painful debates about whether money can ever compensate for the horrors of the Holocaust. John Authers and Richard Wolffe offer a spellbinding investigative account of this momentous international struggle. *The Victim's Fortune* captures the personalities, ruthless tactics, and moral dilemmas surrounding the fight over compensation -- all unfolding against the backdrop of one of the darkest moments in human history.

.com "You can't make the dead good again. We can only take a modicum of justice--a modicum of attempting to somehow right wrongs in a small way for those who are still alive." So remarked a Holocaust survivor on receiving compensation--small, but meaningful--for the tortures he had suffered six decades before. That compensation, for him and thousands of other victims, was a long time in coming. When it did, it was not done out of innate goodness on, say, the part of the banks of Switzerland, which had held billions of dollars deposited there by men and women who would not live to claim them--even though, financial journalists Authers and Wolffe are quick to remark, those banks were staffed by good and well-intentioned people. What compelled those banks, along with companies and governments throughout the world, to do so was massive legal action, a chain of class-action lawsuits that stretched out for half a decade, brought on by lawyers, victims, and civil rights groups in a dense storm of argumentation. In this careful, complex study, Authers and Wolffe detail how these actions took shape against very long odds. Their book is a fascinating case study in justice served--if, some critics continue to charge, too little and too late. --Gregory McNamee
From Publishers Weekly
Authers and Wolffe, journalists for the Financial Times, trace the efforts made from 1995 to date to win compensation for those who lost assets and endured forced labor at the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators in WWII. They talk to the heads of Jewish organizations and senior American government officials, all of whom were fighting on behalf of the victims, as well as to the victims' lawyers. Using strategies such as threatened boycotts, calculated emotional outbursts, public pressure campaigns and class action suits, this group of Americans targeted European banks that had pocketed balances belonging to Holocaust victims, insurers who never paid out life insurance proceeds, and industrial concerns that benefited from forced (and even slave) labor during the war. Though impressive settlements have been negotiated, the story is a dispiriting one, regardless of how one feels about reparations: each new episode in the battle generated recriminations and bitterness among the plaintiffs, and distribution is the most contentious phase of all. Some of the lawyers are drawing multimillion-dollar fees while their

clients receive amounts in the low thousands. Certain Jewish organizations that had led the compensation campaign are now fighting Holocaust survivors for control of the money. Authers and Wolfe's well-researched and nuanced book demonstrates how the struggle for reparations has simultaneously been a fight for justice and a vindictive squabble over money. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Booklist The authors, both correspondents for the Financial Times, have written a powerful chronicle of the riveting negotiations and litigation that led to Germany, Swiss Banks, and many European corporations and insurance companies paying out billions of dollars to survivors of the Holocaust and to families of those who didn't survive. Authers and Wolfe use a novelistic approach to heighten the drama of this process, which began almost 50 years after the end of World War II when a small group of lawyers, working separately, launched a campaign that reached into the highest levels of governments, banks, and corporations. The campaign was waged on multi-fronts--starting with the Swiss banks that had absconded with billions of Nazi funds, and leading to European insurance companies which, when confronted with claims from the children of Jews murdered by the Nazis, bureaucratically closed the door on benefits. Finally, litigation was begun to pay reparations to those who were forced into slave labor during the war. In all, this is an almost Ludlum-esque page-turner. Allen Weakland Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved