

Dr. Anette Homlong Storeide (NTNU/The Falstad Center)

(ORCID ID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3613-8824>, words 9904)

Constructing “the Seventh Million”?

Holocaust and National Identity in Contemporary Israel

Introduction

In 1991 the Israeli historian Tom Segev published his controversial book *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, two years before Steven Spielberg’s film *Schindler’s List* put the Nazi extermination of the European Jews on the agenda for a broader audience. In his book Segev discusses “the ways in which the bitter events of the past continue to shape the life of a nation. Just as the Holocaust imposed a posthumous collective identity on its six million victims, so too it formed the collective identity of this new country”.¹ Segev uses the metaphor “seventh million” to express the dominance of the Holocaust in and for national memory and identity of the Israelis. However, one could argue that the boom of Holocaust memory had just started when Segev published his book. Over the past 25 years an international boom of Holocaust memory can be observed, which has resulted in numerous memorials, museums, exhibitions, autobiographical publications as well as fictional and non-fictional work, study programmes, university chairs and so on. Holocaust has meanwhile been coined a European and even a global memory.²

The causal relation between Holocaust and Israel, the Israelis as the “seventh million”, is a construction that overlook—or patches up—several complicating aspects of this relation. The Holocaust took place before the state of Israel was established, and it did not take place there. The victims of the Holocaust were neither citizens of the state of Israel, nor part of the Jewish

community in Palestine. Furthermore, most Holocaust survivors did not immigrate to Israel after the state was founded. Of those survivors who did settle in Israel, several moved on to other countries like the US, others suffered from alienation and lack of integration. The relation between the Yishuv (the body of the Jewish community in British Palestine) and its political leaders, Zionist-groups and Holocaust survivors was often difficult due to splitting and partly contradicting world-views and experiences from WWII.³

The categories of both ‘survivors’ and ‘Jews’ are by no means clear-cut. It matters if a person considered is religious or not, is traditional or secular, a Zionist, not a Zionist or an Anti-Zionist, is conservative, liberal or a communist, is a nationalist or cosmopolite, rich or poor, educated or not, and it matters indeed, from where a person originated. The ‘Jews’ form a heterogeneous group as do the ‘Holocaust survivors’, whose experiences during the Nazi period and WWII differed immensely. The reasons for settling in Palestine before Israel’s existence as well as for immigrating to Israel were more complex than pure Zionist belief. Concerning the European Jews immigrating to Palestine in the 1930s, many of them came as refugees and not because they were Zionists. Also, the reasons for Holocaust survivors and others settling in Israel were diverse: Some sought protection, others grabbed the possibility to rebuild their lives in a new country, some attempted to escape the traumatic past, or were not able to return to their homes, e.g. because of Soviet anti-Jewish politics, or did in fact immigrate to Israel with the explicit political intention to participate in the building of a Jewish state. So how did the Holocaust become the focal point of identification, as Segev has argued?

This chapter discusses the role of the Holocaust for national memory and identity in contemporary Israel and asks to what extent Segev’s metaphor is still valid in the age of globalization. Based on a sociological and socio-constructive approach to memory and identity,

the chapter will discuss Holocaust and national identity in Israel by analysing the state memorial Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, as an institutionalization of the national memory and identity of the Holocaust. Furthermore, it will analyse two essential strategies of cultural ritualization in Israel: The Holocaust Remembrance Day⁴ 2018 and the March of the Living. Finally, the question of Israel's response to the globalization of Holocaust memory will be discussed.

Some Introductory Remarks on Memory and Identity

This chapter bases its analysis of Israel's national memory and identity on a sociological and social-constructivist approach by defining memory and identity as no mere reflections of certain events, but as constructions inevitably dependent on the respective historical, political and cultural context. The French philosopher Maurice Halbwachs has coined the term collective memory to underline memory—and thereby also identity—as a product of social interaction and of the framework for this interaction.⁵ The German memory studies experts Jan Assmann, Aleida Assmann and Astrid Erll have underlined the impact also of cultural frames of memory.⁶ Astrid Erll has stated that “[t]he individual person always remembers within sociocultural contexts. And cultural formations are based on ‘collective memory’”.⁷ Erll draws on Halbwachs' concept of collective memory by insisting on the social frames of memory, but goes further than Halbwachs in stressing the importance of the cultural frames and formations, like symbols, media institutions and social practises, as ways of transmitting versions of the past. As social and cultural constructions, memory and identity can be manipulated. Culturally manifestations of memories like monuments, images, rituals and books constitute symbolic forms of a society's self-conception. Official national symbols, institutions and practises convey the memory of the past as the state promotes it for the future. Therefore, the state memorial Yad Vashem can be understood as a cultural expression of Israel's official and

national Holocaust memory. The history of the state memorial since its establishment in 1953 does reflect how the Israeli state has dealt with its relation to the Holocaust and to the survivors. In the same way the annual marking of the Holocaust Remembrance Day and the March of the Living become cultural rituals aimed at conveying a certain version of the past, especially to the younger generations. Understanding memory and identity as social and collective phenomena means that also individual memory and identity are developed and constructed within social and cultural frames. Psychologist Carol Fleisher Feldman claims that

(...) all national narratives are typical group-defining stories in that (a) they are highly patterned, (b) that they also affect the form of personal autobiography, and, (c) that they go underground as cognition where they serve as mental equipment for the interpretation of events.⁸

Who has the power to construct and establish such patterns or to canonize certain narratives has not only the power to decide what is remembered and what will be forgotten and/or repressed. Moreover, having the power to decide on the patterns for memory and identity inevitable means having strong power over the respective group or society. This chapter focuses on the role of the Holocaust in the State of Israel's "group-defining story" and how this story has been promoted. The "group-defining story" of the direct link and causality between the Holocaust and the State of Israel, between Holocaust survivors and Israelis, is transmitted through rituals like the Holocaust Remembrance Day and the March of the Living. Both rituals implement aspects of re-enactment and reproduction of national legitimized patterns of how the history of Holocaust is supposed to be understood and remembered in relation to the history of the State of Israel. In this way Yad Vashem as such as well as Holocaust Remembrance Day and the March of the Living can be interpreted as group-defining rituals aimed at constructing the Israelis as "the seventh million".

Memory and identity constitute multi-levelled phenomena that operate on individual, local, regional, national and international levels that are interdependently interactive. Nation-building

as national identity-construction always has a twofold aim: internally, it is directed at the building of a strong national community ('in-group'), and externally, it is directed at the building of an image of a nation with specific values, which promotes sympathy and support. I will argue that the Holocaust's role in and for national identity in Israel is a result of what the Swedish historian Klas-Göran Karlsson has defined as political and existential uses of history. History, or selective parts of it, can be "activated in a communicative process so that certain groups can satisfy certain needs or look after certain interests".⁹ Karlsson differentiates between existential, moral, ideological, political and scholarly-scientific uses of history, but emphasizes that the categories can also be overlapping. Identity-construction is normally thought of as a result of positive identification-marks. However, in his famous speech entitled "What is a nation?" in 1882 at the Sorbonne the French philosopher Ernest Renan pointed out that the feeling of community—that of a nation—is constituted most of all by a shared heroic past or by shared suffering.¹⁰ For Jews, the historical catastrophe of the Holocaust can function as a constitutive element in a twofold way; as a positive memory of heroic resistance and survival (the survival as such as resistance to attempted extermination) and as a negative memory of the tragedy of the victims. In both ways the Holocaust constitutes an event that can serve the future and underline Israel's right and need to exist.

Institutionalization of National Memory: The role of Yad Vashem in Israeli Memory Politics

On the occasion of the 2018 Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yad Vashem distributed a newsletter entitled "70 years of remembering and building" in accordance with this year's slogan for the day.¹¹ The newsletter calls to remember the many Holocaust survivors who helped to establish and build up the State of Israel. It ends with a plea for donations to the memorial. The newsletter argues that by donating to the memorial, the donators honour the

survivors by contributing to the continued “remembering and the building” at a time when there are hardly any survivors still alive. Yad Vashem’s newsletter can be read as a transmission of a specific narrative of 70 years of history of Israel: A narrative centred on the historical event of the Holocaust. In this narrative, Holocaust is presented as not only an integral part of the state, but as the very starting point of it and for the 70 years of state-building that followed. Remembering the victims of this historic catastrophe is inseparable from the support of this state e.g. the financial support for its Holocaust memorial. The 2018 Holocaust Remembrance Day was explicitly held in honour of the 70th birthday of Israel. The twofold narrative of Israel’s history constructed in the newsletter is epitomized in “remembering and building”. This title combines two temporalities that each imply an ethical imperative; the past (“remembering”) and the future (“building”), that both call on active engagement.

One aspect that is not addressed in the newsletter is the question of how to build a state compared to how to build a nation. The national identity of Israel, as this newsletter presents it, is clearly centred on the Holocaust and the identity of Israel as a state of persecuted Jews. Since its establishment in 1953, Yad Vashem’s memorial and scholarly work has preferably centred on exposing names and faces of the six million victims of the Holocaust, thereby reinstating them into a specific identity and personality, which the Nazis tried to exterminate. This biographical commemorative strategy is also implied in Yad Vashem’s newsletter where: “[W]e ask you to partner with us [by donating] as a tribute to the courageous individuals like Eliezer”.¹² The newsletter presents a short biography of Eliezer Ayalon who survived four concentration camps, who was liberated in May 1945, and finally: “Just six months later, Eliezer arrived in Eretz Israel where he later served in the Israeli army.”¹³ Eliezer Ayalon is thereby turned into a symbol of Holocaust survivors who participated in building and securing

the State of Israel and thereby symbolizing the link between the past (Holocaust) and the future (Israel).

As a state-funded national memorial institution Yad Vashem plays a crucial work in the constructing of national memory and identity. The newsletter reflects the changing role of the state memorial as well as the changing collective memory of the Holocaust in Israel over the 70 years of the state's existence. The Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Law of 1953 established both Yad Vashem and the Holocaust Remembrance Day. Yad Vashem is Hebrew for memorial. It is situated at the Mount Herzl–Mountain of Remembrance–in Jerusalem nearby Israel's national cemetery where Theodor Herzl and the presidents of Israel are buried. The location underlines its position as national institution. The conceptual and architectural design of today's Yad Vashem is, however, not the result of a fundamental master plan. Instead the lack of consistency of today's memorial site reflects that the site has developed gradually since the beginning in 1953. In 1960 less than 20 000 people visited the site, today it has more than one million visitors every year.¹⁴ The site as such was inaugurated in 1957 with a small memorial. There was an intention to develop archive resources, but there were no plans to incorporate exhibitions. Only a few years later, in 1961, the Hall of Remembrance was inaugurated and in 1962, the Avenue of the Righteous. Over the decades Yad Vashem was turned into a more complex and consistent memorial site engaged in a wide range of educational, research and commemoration activities. This has especially been the case since the Holocaust History Museum was inaugurated in 2005, which is alone four times larger than the former Yad Vashem, and which marked a shift in Yad Vashem's work from mostly Israeli matters to a global scale. The question is, why did these expansions happen and how do they reflect the changing role of Holocaust for national identity in Israel?

The establishment of Yad Vashem and the Holocaust Remembrance Day in 1953 as cultural representations of Holocaust memory did not reflect the social status of the Holocaust survivors in Israel at that time. In the mid-1950s one out of three Israelis was a Holocaust survivor, meaning that about 350,000 Holocaust survivors lived in Israel at this time.¹⁵ However, the presence of Holocaust survivors in Israel in the 1950s was not reflected in the national public discourse. Their nightmares, worries and anxieties remained private traumata. Their experiences were hardly discussed in the public sphere. Traumata of the Holocaust were portrayed or expressed in literature and art but failed to reach a broader public.¹⁶

The first decades of the state's existence were by no means peaceful. Instead of pushing an image of Jewish suffering and the need of the state to prevent Jewish suffering in the future, the political elite of Israel focused on pushing ideals like courage, strength and self-defence. The history of the Holocaust, instead, entailed the vision of victimization, of suffering and of mass slaughter of humble creatures. The widespread image of the victims of the Holocaust 'walking as lambs to the slaughter' was an image of embarrassment and shame in Israel.¹⁷ Instead the educational objective sought to promote heroism and military resistance. This might explain why the Holocaust played only a marginal role in the Israeli education system in the first decades of its existence. Instead, events such as the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943, partisan fighting and the role of the Yishuv's aid to the Jews were at the centre of attention and obtained a disproportional large part of Israel's narrative of the experiences of Jews' during WWII.¹⁸ However, the history of the activities of the Yishuv during the Holocaust in itself represented a traumatic memory for Israel. The restrictive immigration policy in the British Mandate of Palestine in the 1930s and 1940s, strongly supported by the Zionist leadership of the Yishuv who wanted to bring young and strong immigrants of Zionist belief to Palestine, remained heavily disputed.¹⁹ Furthermore, the passivity of the Yishuv during the Holocaust,

despite its knowledge of the Nazi extermination of the European Jewry in the early 1940s, represented a difficult topic.

The general focus was placed on heroism during the Holocaust, in order to motivate the youth and the other citizens of the newly established Jewish state and to supply them with an ideal. Resistance and uprising correlated better with the idea of state- and nation-building in the newly established Jewish state. Victims who had died ‘walking like lambs to the slaughter’, refugees and traumatized survivors did not resemble the Zionist image of a hero actively engaging in constructing the new state.

This is a specific narrative of WWII, which favours those aspects that were considered positive national deeds and it is not confined to Israeli history telling. Rather, it reflects a larger Western-European pattern. The resistance against the Nazis became national founding-myths in a number of states in the decades after the end of the WWII as well, and here too, they resulted in a neglect of the memory of the Holocaust.²⁰ The positive values from the fight against the Nazis served the (re)building of the national-states in the post-war era as did e.g. Norway with its focus on the ‘Homefront’. The alleged solidarity from the broad resistance against the Nazis was turned into a constructive element of developing a Norwegian welfare state.

As such, Yad Vashem at first only played a minor role in Israeli politics. This started to change with the trial against Adolf Eichmann, previously head of the so-called Department of Jewish questions in the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA) and a main perpetrator in the Nazi genocide on the European Jewry, in Jerusalem in 1961. The case against Eichmann received a large domestic and international media attention. A large number of survivors were summoned

as witnesses, both from Israel and abroad, and their testimonies shifted the perspective on the WWII to that of the genocide on the European Jewry on an international level.

As the trial was based on testimonies of witnesses, Yad Vashem became an important contributor. It cooperated closely with the attorney general's office to find witnesses, especially survivors of Auschwitz.²¹ The general attorney and prosecutor in the trial against Eichmann, Gideon Hausner, sought to focus on the event of the Holocaust, and not merely on criminal acts of Eichmann himself to prove him guilty. Therefore he wanted to build his case on a large number of survivors' testimonies, not least to stress the emotional aspect of the case.²² Until then, the work of the small Yad Vashem Institute centred around recording testimonies of Holocaust survivors and establishing an archive of testimonies. The Eichmann trial turned Yad Vashem into an institution of expertise and a source for witnesses. The institution's importance thereby increased considerably.

The testimonies given by the survivors during the trial depicted enormous atrocities and suffering and contributed heavily in shifting the perspective on the nature of WWII. Gideon Hausner saw himself as the representative of "six million accusers".²³ From now on this metaphor became a code for the Zionists to underline the tragedy and an argument for Israel's existence. The code of "six millions" failed to take into account the social, cultural and religious national differences within the group as well as the variety of countries of origin. The focus on Holocaust as a specific Jewish catastrophe of the "six million" was one important reason why Hannah Arendt's book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963) wasn't published in Israel until 2000. The image of the 'banality of evil' as a result of modern bureaucracy and the modernization of civilization did not fit into the idea of the singularity of the Holocaust, the repetition of which was to be prevented by a Jewish state.

The trial against Eichmann and the resulting focus on the Nazi extermination of the Jews turned memory politics into foreign politics when parts of the Yad Vashem Law of 1953 suddenly brought a solution to a diplomatic dilemma. The trial took place at the same time when the negotiations between the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and Israel on compensations and reparations commenced. Although Prime Minister Ben-Gurion fought for reparations, he did not want to alienate the FRG from Israel. Although the question of the Holocaust played a minor role in Israeli memory politics, it constituted an issue in foreign policy (the relation to the FRG) and security policy (security of the Jewish state surrounded by Arab neighbours). Parts of the Eichmann trial therefore followed a very pragmatic concern. It was in this context, when the initiative of naming 'Righteous among the Nations' became important.²⁴ Until then, this initiative had been a sleeping paragraph of the Yad Vashem Law but facing possible diplomatic complications of the Eichmann trial this category offered an eagerly sought-after strategy to emphasize 'friendly' individuals, and also states, in this case the FRG.

The category of 'The Righteous among the Nations' is meant to commemorate and honour non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. Putting Eichmann on trial in a public process in Jerusalem established the link between the victims of the Holocaust and Israel. It was Prime Minister Ben-Gurion's personal decision that Heinrich Grüber, a pastor interned in the Dachau concentration camp from 1941 to 1943 for helping Jews, should be called to testify during the trial. He was mentioned, as were also other witnesses during the trial, as a 'Righteous among the Nations', and later officially designed as one.²⁵ The trial accentuated the 'Righteous among the Nations' and thereby praised the deeds of the French, the Belgians, Dutch, Italians, Danish and Norwegians, without mentioning the Vichy regime, Quisling, Mussolini or other forms of collaboration of/in the former occupied countries. As the French

sociologist Sarah Gensburger has argued, the policy of the ‘Righteous among the Nations’ was dominated by diplomatic rather than commemorative aims in the beginning and was thereby turned into political use of history in order to avoid potential negative diplomatic consequences of the Eichmann trial for the young Israeli state.

The designation of ‘Righteous among the Nations’ strengthened the role of Yad Vashem in Israeli memory politics. In February 1962, Yad Vashem established a separate department within its institute to deal with the designation of ‘Righteous among the Nations’ and decided that each designated person should have a tree planted in his or her name to create an Avenue of the Righteous in Yad Vashem.²⁶ The inauguration of the Avenue of the Righteous took place on the Holocaust Remembrance Day in 1962.²⁷

In the aftermath of the Eichmann trial, the Holocaust gradually became a focal point of identification in Israeli memory politics. How far the national image of Israel had changed through the Eichmann trial becomes clear in the verdict of Adolf Eichmann in December 1961: “The terrible slaughter of millions of Jews by Nazi criminals, which almost obliterated European Jewry, was one of the great causes of the establishment of a state of survivors. The state cannot be disconnected from its roots in the Holocaust of European Jewry.”²⁸ In this way, Israel was neither portrayed as a result of a historical right to the land of Israel nor of Zionist fight for independence, but as a consequence of the Holocaust. From now on Israel gradually transformed into a state for and of a persecuted Jewish nation. The Holocaust could serve as a useful political strategy, different from religious and cultural Jewish traditions, because it served not only as a strong argument towards Jews to legitimize the State of Israel, but also towards non-Jews.

However, the eventual turning points in Israel's political and existential use of the history of the Holocaust were The Six-Day War (1967) and the Yom Kippur War (1973). These wars triggered an Israeli identity crisis and wide public criticism, which shed insecurity and doubt both on the meaning of the war and of Israel's existence. The narrative of the persecuted Jewish nation was further reinforced after the Likud takeover of power in May 1977. In 1977 the Ministry of Education decided on a new curriculum entitled "From Holocaust to Resurgence".²⁹ The title reflects the main argument of the national image promoted by the curriculum: The Holocaust now legitimized Israel's establishment, existence and revival. Among the new educational initiatives, the Ministry suggested mandatory visits to commemorative institutions in Israel and in Poland (see further elaboration in a later sub-chapter).

The Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War highlighted that Arab neighbouring states now represented the main threat against the state of Israel. In this context, Western Allies became important as well as sympathy for the Jewish case in the wider public. Here the history of the Holocaust represented a useful narrative strategy. The history of the Holocaust could serve both existential (legitimization of the existence of Israel as the only way to prevent a new genocide on the Jews), political (legitimization of Israel as a state of victims and heroes, the latter were also to be found among the non-Jewish 'Righteous among the Nations') and moral (legitimization of the Israeli people as objects of compassion and support, also because of the failure of protecting the Jews in the past) purposes.

The two wars resulted in renewed political backing for the Yad Vashem memorial.³⁰ In the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, Yad Vashem was gradually seen as an important actor not only for commemorating the past, but also for building and shaping identity for the future, which was also reflected in budget allocations, the architectural development and geographical

expansion of the site as well as in educational programmes. Among others the new political support resulted in the construction of the 21 m high Column of Heroism in 1968, and the establishment of a pedagogical department of 1973 with the goal to strengthen the moral of Israeli soldiers. In 1973, Yad Vashem also opened a permanent exhibition that aimed at the identification with the victims and contained a strong moral appeal to defend the Jewish state by all means.

The end of the Cold War and Spielberg's film *Schindler's List* (1993) sparked an international boom of Holocaust memory that also affected Yad Vashem. In the same year when Spielberg's highly successful film was released, the making of which Yad Vashem had supported, the planning for a new and larger Holocaust museum started. For the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Israel Yad Vashem created a new exhibition aimed at the presentation of "The integration and contribution of Holocaust survivors in the years 1945-1958" and entitled "Under this Blazing Light".³¹ The poster of the exhibition—which existed in various editions although all bore the same main motive—pictured an athletic man carrying a backpack and a suitcase while looking in front of him at an object not captured in the picture. The suitcase is a well-known symbol for the Holocaust because of the footages of piles of suitcases in Auschwitz. In Israel, however, the suitcase also symbolizes displaced persons (DP) arriving in the Yishuv or later in Israel. By picturing the suitcase, the poster creates the image of a survivor and immigrant looking courageous and spirited into the future of Israel. The poster bears no witness to the poor situation of the DP-camps and the insecurity and on-going suffering of the weak and traumatized survivors. Instead the poster constructs a teleological development from Holocaust survival to state foundation where the spirited and energetic survivor incorporates the link between the hell of the past, which he has heroically conquered, and the glorious future of an independent Jewish state. Assuming "integration and contribution", the exhibition

constructs an affirmative interpretation of the situation of the Holocaust survivors and their relation to the state of Israel, without questioning to what an extent Holocaust survivors did contribute to or even support the establishment of Israel or to what an extent integration was successful in the first decade of the state's existence.

Furthermore, Yad Vashem sees 'Holocaust survivors' as a homogenous group without differentiating between their various religious and national backgrounds or their various experiences of persecution. Thereby Yad Vashem, as the national authority on the Holocaust in Israel, legitimized the relation of Israel to the Holocaust by constructing an exhibition related to the foundation of the state. This exhibition, as a form of official cultural memory of the Holocaust, dates an assumed integration and contribution of the survivors of the Nazi genocide to the year 1945, that is, immediately after their survival or rescue from the genocide and three years before the foundation of the state of Israel. In reality, in 1945 most survivors still lived in DP-camps in Europe.

The "new" Yad Vashem opened in 2005 after 12 years of planning and development. The memorial had been expanded to a size more than four times larger than the old one. It now also contain a massive Holocaust History Museum, a new and larger Hall of Names, a Museum of Holocaust Art, an exhibition pavilion as well as a learning centre and a visual centre.³² The massive expansion of the Yad Vashem can be interpreted both as a cultural expression of the expanded role of the Holocaust for Israel's national identity and as a response to the international Holocaust memory-boom and the increased competition between Holocaust museums and memorials globally. Especially the architecture of the Holocaust History Museum bears strong symbolic functions in transmitting the State of Israel as the heritage of the Holocaust survivors. Centred in the middle of the memorial and constructed as a long spike

through the mountain it presents the history of the Holocaust over 4,200 square meters, mostly underground, as a dark event leaving a wound in civilization and nature. The exhibition leads to the Hall of Names, and further on, at the end of the spike, to a balcony providing the visitors with an extraordinary panorama-view of Jerusalem. This architectural construction; coming from the darkness of the partly underground Holocaust museum to the shining panorama of modern Israel, symbolizes this existential legitimation of the state of Israel.

This immense expansion of Yad Vashem can be understood, first, as sign of the increased role of Holocaust for Israeli identity; second, as a result of the need to educate younger generations and remind them of what can happen if they fail to defend their state; third, as a result of increased competition from other institutions, like the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, on who has the right and the authority to tell and interpret history of the Holocaust; fourth, the state's increased need for sympathy and support internationally because of the political situation in the Middle East; and fifth, as a result of a general 'genocide competition'. The genocides in Bosnia (1992-95) and Rwanda (1994) as well as the increased focus on the Turkish genocide on the Armenians (1915-20) have increasingly questioned the singularity of the Holocaust. Since the EU Eastern Enlargement also the rise of the totalitarian paradigm, the attempted juxtaposition of Nazism and Communism, has contributed to this.³³

Also, Yad Vashem's slogan for the 2018 Holocaust Remembrance Day—"70 years of remembering and building: Holocaust survivors and the state of Israel"—constructs a narrative of the relation between the survivors and the state that fails to address the many conflicting interests and foci between Holocaust survivors and the Yishuv. During the 2018 commemoration ceremony in Yad Vashem, Prime Minister Netanyahu's utterly political

speech made it very clear that Yad Vashem constitutes not only a memorial aimed at commemorating the past, but also very much a site of memory and identity *politics*.

Commemorative Ritualization: The Holocaust Remembrance Day 2018

The marking of Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day starts at sunset on the 27th of the month of Nisan and ends the following evening, thereby reflecting the Jewish custom of marking a day. The day refers to the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto of 19 April 1943, and its celebration falls between the Pesach and the Day of Independence on 14 May 1948. The close temporal link of the celebrations of Pesach, the ghetto uprising and the foundation of the state of Israel ties the traditional celebration for the liberation from the slavery in Egypt to the uprising of the ghetto inmates against their Nazi suppressors and to the establishment of the State of Israel. This creates an image of a long historic fight for independence that culminated with the founding of the State of Israel.

At the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration ceremonies are held throughout the country, but the official one is held in Yad Vashem in the presence of the president and the prime minister as well as survivors and their families. The central part of the opening ceremony at sunset is the Torch lighting Ceremony, in which six torches, representing the six million victims of the Holocaust, are lit. These torches are also forming the emblem of the Yad Vashem. The commemoration ceremony traditionally combines Jewish history and tradition, Israeli state symbols—the flag, the presence of the military—and the history of the Holocaust. The torch lighting for the victims and the presence of soldiers construct two main symbols of the ceremony, representing the past and the secure future of Israel respectively. In 2018 the marking of the Holocaust Remembrance Day started at sunset on 11 April in Yad Vashem and ended

the following evening. The ceremony in Yad Vashem was broadcasted live on Israeli television and via the Internet, thereby enabling a global audience to attend interactively.³⁴

The opening ceremony of the Holocaust Remembrance Day celebration on 11 April 2018 revealed that Segev's image of constructing the "seventh million" is more valid than ever. At the beginning of the ceremony, a narrative of the history of Israel was outlined, that, because of Yad Vashem's status, can be interpreted as a national narrative of the state of Israel of 2018:

Israel is no compensation for the Holocaust, but an ancient 2000 years old vision. Holocaust was an attempted end to this vision, but [instead] Holocaust stressed the importance of establishing Israel. (...) The Jewish people established the state of Israel in its weakest moment.³⁵

The Holocaust survivors are presented as an essential and integral part of the history of the State of Israel. By equating the suffering of the victims with the heroism of the survivors this national narrative unites the two categories, the victims and the heroes, that the state identity was unable to integrate during the two first decades of the state's existence. The narrative outlined in this ceremony presented an Israeli identity marked by an outspoken self-confidence after 70 years of existence. Although the extension of anti-Semitism has not changed, it is explicitly stated that Israel has. In the introductory parts of the ceremony, the state is characterized as "powerful and confident" and marked by "continuity, construction and creativity".³⁶ The "agents of Israel" keep it strong, so this narrative, and the listing of such agents included first and foremost the Holocaust survivors, but also actors like the settlers, the Mossad, the army and the secret services.³⁷ By listing military and intelligence branches this anniversary presentation differed from commemorative speeches held in other European countries, also by listing the settlers that constitute a controversial part of Israeli politics in an international perspective. At this point the opening ceremony referred to the March of the Living from Auschwitz to Birkenau on the ensuing day and presented it as a revival of the State of Israel and of the Holocaust survivors. In this way the march can be understood as a temporal and

spatial link between the past suffering in Nazi extermination camps and the contemporary constructing and defending of the State of Israel (see further elaboration on the March of the Living in the next sub-chapter).

An essential part of the opening ceremony 2018 before the main part, the Torch lighting ceremony, was the speech by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.³⁸ His speech represented to a large degree a highly political use of history more than a commemorative act and seemed more aimed at legitimizing Israel's existence and right to self-defence than to commemorating the victims of the Holocaust. Several elements of his speech linked the contemporary political and military situation explicitly to the 1930s in Europe. Netanyahu used the history of the 1930s to argue for Israel's right to defend itself and the pressing need to do so. The Prime Minister opened his speech by drawing on the traditional light-darkness metaphor comparing Holocaust and today's Israel to respectively darkness and light. Netanyahu described a contemporary political situation marked by Swastika graffiti in Gaza and the use of chemical agent on Syrian children. He compared this situation with the situation of the European Jews in the 1930s. If one main lesson could be learnt from the 1930s, Netanyahu said, it is that evil spreads rapidly. He stated that he had tried to convey this lesson to the UN Security Council two months earlier, but without success. Netanyahu compared the contemporary situation in the UN Security Council with the Allied complacency after the Munich Agreement in 1938. The Allies' unwillingness to stop aggression early in the 1930s had allowed the Holocaust to unfold. This history has taught Israel to regard "stopping aggression as a serious business", and Netanyahu underlined the Israeli "stringent and aggressive defence against attacks". Netanyahu used the history of the Holocaust to legitimize current political and military actions of the state. The current increasingly tensed political relation with Iran at the time of the Holocaust

Remembrance Day 2018 constitute an essential political context of Netanyahu's speech, that might explain the degree of politicization.

The relation between Israel and Iran constituted a large part of the Prime Minister's commemorative speech. Netanyahu compared the Nuclear Agreement with Iran with the 1938 Munich Agreement, both illustrating that "paper might not be serious". Netanyahu accused Iran of ignoring the agreement and thereby causing a situation of radicalization similar to that of Europe in the 1930s. However, although Netanyahu presented a negative and dramatic vision of the contemporary political situation in the Middle East, he by no means saw it ending in genocide like it did 80 years ago. During the Holocaust the Jews were defenceless, but today they have a powerful state and army, so Netanyahu, and he explicitly put Israel at the "forefront in the fight against terror", and the Holocaust survivors in the foreground as inspiring heroes. Netanyahu's speech took place on a stage next to Holocaust survivors and Israeli soldiers, and he underlined the "revival of Israel" as the "revenge of the Holocaust". In this way, the history of the Holocaust is even used to legitimize military actions and war against Iran.

Most of Netanyahu's speech outlined Israel's need to defend its interests, first, against the enemy neighbours that seeks to wipe the country of the map, second, against contemporary anti-Semitism in Europe, and third, against the general lack of Western understanding for the Israeli need to defend itself, the latter is also promoted under the umbrella of "fight against terror". By linking the contemporary political and military situation to the events following the Munich Agreement of 1938, Netanyahu constructed a situation of emergency in which Israel stands out as the only state realizing the danger and in which the UN Security Council is presented as just as passive and benevolent as the Allied after the Munich Agreement of 1938.

In this way, Netanyahu constructed the Allies as bystanders to the Holocaust, stating that Israel today is not willing to repeat this mistake in the on-going political struggle in the Middle East.

In the subsequent Torch lighting Ceremony the past, the present and the future were deeply intertwined and personalized by six survivors, whose history linked the Holocaust to the history of Israel. In the 2018 ceremony the torch lighters contained of two women and four men, originating from six different countries, having experienced a wide range of concentration and extermination camps and having contributed to the building of Israel in various ways, from fighting in the War of Independence, to participating in kibbutz and serving in the Mossad.³⁹ The choice of torch lighters reflected the plurality of origin of the Holocaust survivors who came to Israel, but compared to the general endless material, physical and psychological suffering of Holocaust survivors, these survivors transmit stories of success that concretize the slogan of the 2018 Holocaust Remembrance Day: “Remembering and Building”. The suffering and survival of the Holocaust are inseparably connected to the building of the state of Israel and the rehabilitation of individual lives. No word of trauma, alienation, poverty, dissatisfaction and bitterness can be traced in these stories. On the stage, Israeli flags were flying next to the lightened torches, and the Holocaust survivors were standing next to the Israeli soldiers. In this way the staging symbolically linked the past to the present, and it also demonstrated the safeguarding of the future.

The main message of the survivors’ stories incorporated into the ceremony is that of the lesson of the past, of what can happen when human beings are stripped of their equal rights and their human dignity. This message is similar to the focus of ceremonies of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day in Western countries or of anniversaries of liberation in former sites of Nazi persecution and extermination. The extraordinary part of the ceremony at Yad

Vashem is not the many national flags or the implementation of the anthem, but the strong military presence as well as the highly political speech of Netanyahu. All states use history as a part of their nation-building. However, arguing that Israel uses the history of Holocaust to construct national identity, to legitimize present politics and secure sympathy from other states are always flavoured with an aftertaste of Holocaust-industry-accusations or even Holocaust-denial. All states engage in the constructing of national narratives in order to shape “imagined communities” and patriotic community support.⁴⁰ Regarding the remarkable heterogeneity of Israel with respect to origin, religion, language, origins and ethnicity of its citizens, as well as the fact that the state’s right to existence is denied by all its neighbouring countries, one might not be surprised that the State of Israel is eager to construct a strong national identity. The history of the Holocaust can function both as a unifying factor as well as a useful dystopia of what can happen if the state community is lost. The contemporary state of Israel is only to a tiny degree a state of Holocaust survivors, but it is very much a state traumatized by the Holocaust. This trauma can be instrumentalized, but it can’t be denied. When analysing memory politics in Israel the trauma of the “six million” is still very present. This was at no point more present than during the closing of the opening ceremony of the 2018 Holocaust Remembrance Day, which combines the reading of the Kaddish with the singing of the national anthem: Remembering and mourning the dead, while hoping to be “a free nation in our land”.⁴¹ The presence of the Israeli soldiers served as its guarantee.

The morning after (this year on 12 April 2018), at 10 am the siren sounds all over the country and everything and everyone stop for two minutes in silence to honour the victims of the Holocaust. A nation-wide program of commemoration is carried out all over the country, as well as the March of the Living from Auschwitz to Birkenau (see below), until the commemoration ends in the evening. The nation-wide sounding of the siren and moment of

silence represent essential collective commemorative rituals aimed at constructing the “seventh million”: Honouring the victims, but also reminding the living of what is at stake.

The possibilities offered by new media strategies and Yad Vashem’s active use of digitalization, live streaming and the Internet enable Yad Vashem to reach large audiences worldwide. The ceremony was streamed live via the homepage of Yad Vashem and a video of this year’s ceremony as well as previous ceremonies are available online. The possible audience or receivers of the ritualization of the ceremony is thereby not only limited to those who are actually present at the ceremony in the memorial, but also for the whole world to see. The global aspect of the digitalization along with the inevitable strong Jewish tradition is symbolically in line with the memorial’s new image as ‘The World Holocaust Remembrance Center’. Simultaneously this global perspective is challenged by the symbols of the state of Israel, most prominent the flag and the Israeli soldiers. In the forefront stand the two transnational aspects, Holocaust and Jewishness, but the national aspect of the state of Israel is equally present. In this way, the ceremony serves both the commemoration of the victims, the honouring of helpers and heroes as well as the legitimization of the Jewish state of Israel.

About three months later, the national identity of Israel as a Jewish state was legally institutionalized by the so called Nation-State Bill–Basic Law: Israel – The Nation State of the Jewish People–which gave constitutional status to basic principles highlighting that “The Land of Israel is the historical homeland of the Jewish people, in which the State of Israel was established”.⁴² The State of Israel is termed “the nation state of the Jewish People” thereby underlining that the “exercise of the right to national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish People”. This highly controversial law–the first proposal had been presented in the Knesset in 2011–calls Jerusalem–“complete and united”–the State’s capital

and Hebrew as the State's language. The law has been heavily criticized, not only by Israel's enemies and adversaries, but also both by political liberal and left-wing parties and minorities in Israel. Noteworthy are especially the Arab minority that constitutes 20 % of the Israeli citizens, the Jewish Diaspora, strong Jewish groups in the US like the American Jewish Community (AJC), and also international Allies of Israel, most prominently the EU.⁴³ The opponents to the law argued that it turned non-Jewish citizens into second-class Israelis, created an apartheid system and is likely to overthrow every possibility of a two-state-solution and, as a consequence, any peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Although the law does not explicitly mention the Holocaust, it nonetheless institutionalizes the Holocaust Remembrance Day as one of two official memorial days—the other is the Memorial Day for the Fallen in Israel's Wars—while the Independence Day constitutes the official national holiday. This illustrates that Holocaust has become a part of a threefold national narrative of the State of Israel containing of genocide, defence and sovereignty of the Jewish people.

Overcoming the Temporal and Spatial Gap between Holocaust and Israel: The March of the Living

The March of the Living on one hand constitutes a part of the annual marking of the Holocaust Remembrance Day, meaning the march from Auschwitz to Birkenau taking place at day two of the commemoration. On the other hand, this term refers to an annual education program in former ghettos and sites of Nazi extermination in today's Poland that takes place during two weeks at the time of the Holocaust Remembrance Day. This program started in 1988. Participation is highly encouraged by the Ministry of Education and students participate in steadily growing numbers. Tom Segev has interpreted these trips as commandments to stay in Israel as the only safe place for Jews.⁴⁴ The Ministry of Education encourages the participants to upload the videos on YouTube documenting the travels and their experiences, and in 2016

more than 20,000 clips were available on YouTube. In the same year the documentary *#uploading_holocaust* was constructed by such YouTube clips alone by the Israeli directors Udi Nir and Sagi Bornstein. The film critically reflects the learning outcome and didactic visions of the March of the Living.⁴⁵

Such trips are, however, no Israeli peculiarity, but have been conducted even annually by many survivors and been transmitted as commemoration or documentation trips for the younger generations, for instance in Norway. Such trips are justified didactically by pointing at first, the postulate of learning from history to prevent its repetition, and secondly the specific learning process enabled by the topographical space of a former site of destruction. An ‘aura of authenticity’ is meant to link the past, the present and the future in a unique way, thereby enabling a more fruitful learning process for the pupils and students than the classroom would offer.

However, the Israeli March of the Living can be interpreted as the peak of the State of Israel’s attempt to construct the “seventh million”. The program contains of a strong incentive to get the students to identify with the victims, and by seeing themselves as potential victims only protected by the existence of Israel. Many students participate at March of the Living at the end of their education, the trip thereby representing a graduation and a transition from being a pupil to entering the three years of army service. The March of the Living reminds the young generation of what they are actually defending and what can happen if they fail to do so. This year’s opening ceremony at the Holocaust Remembrance Day stressed the special importance of the next day’s March of the Living. Because of increasing anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial there is a pressing need to focus on the facts of the Holocaust and on the transmitting of this knowledge to the younger generation. Both the lighting of the Torches of Remembrance

and the March of the Living are meant to constitute essential parts of this transmission. The March of the Living unites the remembering of the past and the need to defend the present Israel for the future in order to avoid the past from repeating itself, and thereby the ceremony itself outlines the ritual character of the educational measure. However, critics such as the *Haaretz* journalist Ariana Melamed have argued that the trips should be stopped: “Auschwitz is stark proof of the zenith of organized evil, but the sights it holds cannot teach someone, however emotional and wrapped in an Israeli flag he may be, how to defeat evil”.⁴⁶ The 2018 opening ceremony of the Holocaust Remembrance Day stressed the urgent need to continue. Visiting the former sites of destruction and walking in the footsteps of former victims, constitute an attempt to overcome the temporal, geographical and spatial gap between the Nazi extermination of the past and shape responsible citizens and defenders of the State of Israel. Visiting the former gas chambers serves as a reminder of what they risk if Israel is lost. As several of the video clips of *#uploading_holocaust* illustrate, groups tend to hold ceremonies of celebration in former gas chambers and crematories as acts of resistance against the attempted destruction. The overall presence of the Israeli flag, being carried by several pupils, some of them even sweep themselves in the flag, through former Nazi camps, symbolizes Israel’s will to live. The challenge of 2018 is to transmit this lesson of the past to the future generations, as the generation of survivors, who are symbols and manifestation of this bond, is almost gone. The sites, however, are still there.

Who Has the Right to Define Holocaust memory? Yad Vashem in the Age of Globalization

Since the 1990s, Yad Vashem has in many ways redefined itself from being Israel’s national authority on the Holocaust to branding itself as “The World Holocaust Remembrance Center”. As already outlined Yad Vashem has undergone substantial changes over the last decades, which reflect both new perspectives due to a new political context after the end of the Cold

War, the extended temporal dimension with the passing of time, and new generations engaging themselves with the memory of the Holocaust, not least among the staff at Yad Vashem. Starting out as a minor memorial and as an attempt to establish an archive of testimonies, Yad Vashem's activity today is broadly focused on commemoration, documentation, research and education. Since the millennium the institution has extended its activity and today the institution possesses a detailed archive and name list of victims, which are also partly available online. Furthermore, the institution widely engages in research and education, and also provides numerous education and exhibition material online. Yad Vashem brands itself as "a pioneer of Holocaust museums worldwide".⁴⁷ As an institution engaging in Holocaust remembrance, Yad Vashem was undoubtedly established at an early point. However, when looking at the development of the institution which at first consisted of a small memorial and a provisory archive, Yad Vashem's development escalated only after meeting heavy competition from museums and memorial sites elsewhere.

A large competitor has been the USHMM in Washington, partly because of the competition for specific persons, like Elie Wiesel and Yehuda Bauer, whose been advising both sites, and partly because the institutions compete for the same sponsors for funding.⁴⁸ In the 1990s and early 2000 the USHMM secured the position as the leading Holocaust institution for remembrance, research and education. This triggered a renewal and conceptual change of Yad Vashem as an attempt to (re)gain this position, an objective also reflected in Yad Vashem's new branding as "The World Holocaust Remembrance Center". Yad Vashem faces competition from other institutions as well. Being the largest 'authentic' site of the Nazi genocide on the European Jewry, the memorial site Auschwitz seeks to take the position as the essential memorial of the Holocaust, representing an important site for remembrance and education for youths from all parts of the world, also for Israeli youths through the March of the Living. Also, since the end

of the 1990s, national, regional and local Holocaust memorials and museums have been established on a number of sites throughout Europe, the US and the rest of the world. Furthermore, the activity of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), an intergovernmental and transnational organization for Holocaust remembrance, education and research has increased the level of scholarly standard on commemoration and education activities as well as fostered transnational cooperation in these fields.⁴⁹ Moreover, the IHRA has contributed to constructing the Holocaust as a major aspect of Western-European memory of the 20th century. Both Yad Vashem and the USHMM are important contributors to the work of the IHRA. At the same time the Holocaust is transformed, a. o. by the UNESCO, to a symbol and pedagogical tool for teaching genocide studies and the values of human rights and democracy in general. In this way, the historical event of the Holocaust is transformed to a general moral and political warning of what humanity risks, if democracy and human rights are lost. This globalization of the Holocaust to a universal lesson challenges Israel's interpretation of the Holocaust as a specific Jewish catastrophe leading to the establishment of a Jewish nation state.

Constructing a national identity on the historical event of the Holocaust—as political and existential use of history—can serve essential political purposes of the Israeli state. Internally a Holocaust memory and identity can serve to construct an Israeli identity in a fragmented society with strong internal political, cultural and religious differences. Externally this form of political use of history contribute to establishing and strengthening of international understanding and support for the state in a contemporary political situation marked by the rise of right-wing-populism and right-wing-extremism in Europe and the US, the terror of the ISIS, the war in Syria and general political and military instability in the Middle East, rising anti-Semitism in Europe not only among Muslim citizens, the increasing international criticism of Israeli politics

against the Palestinians as well as an increasing international support for an independent Palestinian state. The new branding as “The World Holocaust Remembrance Center” can be viewed as an attempt to secure Yad Vashem’s authority to define the memory of the Holocaust in a situation where numerous memorials and museums elsewhere are attempting to tell their story of the meanwhile global memory of the Holocaust. The globalization of Holocaust memory has not just resulted in a boom of memorials, even Miami Beach has one, but also in the transformation of the historic event to a universal lesson of the value of democracy and human rights. Yad Vashem’s strong focus on the uniqueness of the Jewish suffering and the memorial’s simultaneous attempt to convey this national memory of the Holocaust globally, illustrate to what an extent the trauma of the Holocaust continues to dominate Israel’s national self-understanding at a time when the state faces internal political and religious fragmentation and increased international criticism and contestation.

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¹ Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: Picador, 2000[1991]), 11.

² E.g. Claus Leggewie, *Der Kampf um die europäische Erinnerung: Ein Schlachtfeld wird besichtigt* (München: Beck, 2011); Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005).

³ On Israel and Holocaust survivors in early years, see Hanna Yablonka, *Survivors of the Holocaust: Israel after the War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999) and Segev 2000, 15-35.

⁴ *YomHaShoah*–Israel’s Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day–is not to be confused with the International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27th January, the date of the liberation of Auschwitz in 1945, and established by UN General Assembly Resolution 60/7 of 1 November 2005. In this chapter I will use the term Holocaust Remembrance Day when discussing YomHaShoah as does Yad Vashem in its English translations.

⁵ Maurice Halbwachs, *Das Gedächtnis und seine sozialen Bedingungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985[1925]).

⁶ Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in den frühen Hochkulturen* (München: Beck, 1992); Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (München: Beck, 1999); Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

- ⁸ Carol Fleisher Feldman, "Narratives of national identity as group narratives: Patterns of interpretative cognition", in *Narrative and Identity: Studies in Autobiography, Self and Culture*, ed. Jens Brockmeier and Donal Carbaugh (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2001), 129.
- ⁹ Klas-Göran Karlsson, "The Uses of History and the Third Wave of Europeanization", in *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance*, ed. Malgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2010), 45-54, quote p. 45.
- ¹⁰ Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?" (1882), in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi Bhaba (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 8-22.
- ¹¹ Title of Yad Vashem's Newsletter of 10 and 11 April 2018 on the occasion of the 2018 Holocaust Remembrance Day.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Information provided by Yad Vashem. On the history and architecture of Yad Vashem, see for example Matthias Hass, *Gestaltetes Gedenken: Yad Vashem, das U.S.-Holocaust-Memorial-Museum und die Stiftung Topographie des Gedenkens* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002).
- ¹⁵ Segev 2000, 143-144.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Julia Resnik, "'Sites of memory' of the Holocaust: Shaping national memory in the education system in Israel", in *Nations and Nationalism* 9, no. 2 (2003), 297-317, here p. 305.
- ¹⁹ For a more detailed elaboration, see Yablonka 1999 and Segev 2000.
- ²⁰ E.g. Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe 1945-1956* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- ²¹ Sarah Gensburger, *National Policy, Global Memory: The Commemoration of the 'Righteous' from Jerusalem to Paris 1942-2007* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2016), 15f.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Gideon Hausner in his opening speech, quoted from Segev 2000, 347.
- ²⁴ Gensburger 2016, 18-29.
- ²⁵ These aspects are object of a more detailed discussion in *ibid.*, 15, although Gensburger's focus remains on France's adaption of the honorific of the 'Righteous'.

²⁶ Ibid., 20-21.

²⁷ During this ceremony 12 ‘Righteous among the Nations’ were to be designed and to plant their trees. However, a few days earlier a controversy aroused about one of the nominees: Oskar Schindler. Some considered him to be a heroic rescuer; others accused him of financial opportunism. Even the intervention of the prime minister could not prevent the scandal and the official recognition for Oskar Schindler had to be delayed by one week and took place in silence. For a more detailed discussion, see Gensburger 2016, 23-26.

²⁸ Quoted from Segev 2000, 356.

²⁹ Director-General’s Circular 36/8 1977, in Resnik 2003, 308.

³⁰ See also the analysis in Hass 2002.

³¹ See images of the exhibition and poster, in Mosche Zuckermann, “Die Darstellung von Holocaust in Israels Gedenkkultur”, in *Mythen der Nationen – 1945 Arena der Erinnerung*, Vol. 2, ed. Monicka Flacke (Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 2004), 319.

³² For an overview of Yad Vashem, see <http://www.yadvashem.org/visiting/map-of-yad-vashem.html> (accessed May, 1, 2018).

³³ See further elaboration on the singularity-thesis versus the totalitarian paradigm, in Wolfram Kaiser and Anette H. Storeide, “International Organizations and Holocaust Remembrance”, in *International Journal of Cultural Policy* no. 2 (2018).

³⁴ The live recording is available online <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/remembrance/2018/broadcast.asp> (accessed May, 1, 2018).

³⁵ Ibid., timeslot about 10:10-10:15, quotes from the English translation.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., timeslot 30:10-43:16.

³⁹ List of the 2018 torch lighters, accessed May, 1, 2018. <https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/remembrance/2018/torchlighters.asp>.

⁴⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1983).

⁴¹ The full English text of the *Hatikva* (the national anthem), accessed May, 1, 2018. https://knesset.gov.il/holidays/eng/hatikva_eng.htm.

⁴² Knesset, “Basic Law: Israel – The Nation State of the Jewish People”, 19 July 2018, accessed September, 19, 2018. <https://knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/BasicLawNationState.pdf>.

⁴³ Reuters, “EU expresses concern over Israel’s Jewish nation-state law”, 19 July 2018, accessed September, 19, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-politics-law-eu/eu-expresses-concern-over-israels-jewish-nation-state-law-idUSKBN1K91K7>.

⁴⁴ Segev 2000, 502.

⁴⁵ Udi Nir and Sagi Bornstein, *#Uploading_holocaust* (2016), accessed May, 1, 2018. <http://uploading-holocaust.com/page/film>.

⁴⁶ Ariana Melamed, “It’s time to abolish the March of the Living”, in *Haaretz*, 13 April 2018, accessed May, 1, 2018. <https://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-it-s-time-to-abolish-the-march-of-the-living-1.5994878>.

⁴⁷ So a statement by Yad Vashem’s chairman Avner Shalev, accessed May, 1, 2018. <https://www.yadvashem.org/pressroom/articles-avner-shalev.html>. On the global scope of Yad Vashem, see the Press release 22 January 2017, accessed May, 1, 2018. <http://www.yadvashem.org/press-release/22-january-2017-21-20.html>.

⁴⁸ Hass 2000.

⁴⁹ Anette H. Storeide, *The Global Turn? Holocaust Remembrance and Genocide Education in the 21th Century* (forthcoming).