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## **The “Never Again” State of Israel: The Emergence of the Holocaust as a Core Feature of Israeli Identity and Its Four Incongruent Voices**

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*For the vast majority of contemporary Israelis, the Holocaust is an acquired memory. However, over the years its presence has not diminished but rather is on the rise. We describe how perceptions of the Holocaust have changed from “what Israeliness is not” in the 1940s and 1950s to a core element in Israeli identity. Inspired by Bauer, we present four different and sometimes incompatible voices related to the Holocaust that greatly affect the Israeli society. They are: Never be a passive victim; never forsake your brothers; never be passive bystander; and never be a perpetrator. Experimental evidence related to these voices is also described.*

Almost immediately after its establishment in May 1948, the State of Israel, still enmeshed in a difficult war for its survival, became the home for the largest community of Holocaust survivors. About 330,000 Jewish refugees from

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devastated Europe joined the 600,000 members of the Jewish community in Israel in a massive immigration influx. Thus, in 1949, almost every third person in the newborn country was a Holocaust survivor (Yablonka, 1999). The Holocaust survivors' background was not so different from most of the veteran Israelis (who came to the country before WWII). Basically, both groups emigrated from the same, primarily Eastern European localities, and many if not most of the veteran Israelis also had to cope with the news that the families they had left in Europe had perished in the Holocaust. Yet despite this common background and misfortune, there was an unbridgeable divide between the veteran Israelis and the survivors. The Holocaust clearly "belonged" to the survivors and was alien to those who lived in Israel when it transpired. The survivors were not asked to share their stories with others or dwell on their experiences. They were expected to go on with life, rehabilitate themselves, adopt the Israeli identity and become new Israelis. The Holocaust in those days was perceived as something that had happened to the passive and cowardly Jews of the Diaspora who had gone "like sheep to the slaughter" (e.g., [Segev, 2000](#)). It was seen as antithetical to the identity of the "new Israeli," who was active, free, and daring. The Holocaust was something that happened "there" in the Jewish Diaspora and by no means could happen "here" in the new and independent state of Israel.

Today, more than 65 years after the end of WWII, the number of living Holocaust survivors has naturally dwindled (currently less than 3% of the Israeli population). For the vast majority of contemporary Israelis, the Holocaust is an acquired rather than a living memory. However, the presence of the Holocaust and its place in Israeli collective identity has not faded in the last 65 years but is rather on the rise (e.g., [Bar Tal 2007](#); [Ofer, 2009](#)). For example, most of Oron's (1993) respondents, college students, endorsed the statement that "all Jewish people must see themselves as Holocaust victims." Most recently, 98.1% of the respondents in a 2009 survey of the Jewish-Israeli adult population (Arian, 2012) have stated that remembering the Holocaust is a guiding principle in their life; in fact, more important principle than other guiding principles such as "Feeling part of the Jewish people," "Feeling part of Israeli society," "Living in Israel" or even "Having a family."

In this article we first describe the omnipresence of the Holocaust in Israeli life today. Then we delineate how the Holocaust has gradually been transformed from "what Israeliness is not" into one of the core elements of Israeli identity. Next, we argue (inspired by Bauer, 2002) that the *Never Again* imperative derived from the Holocaust invokes not one but at least four powerful and frequently conflicting voices. They are: (1) *never be a passive victim*; (2) *never forsake your brothers*; (3) *never be passive bystander*; and (4) *never be a perpetrator*. We will demonstrate how these voices impact major arenas of Israeli life today. Finally, we will present experimental evidence pertaining to the first and fourth voices.

*The Omnipresence of the Holocaust in Contemporary Israeli Life*

Political scientists Liebman and Don-Yihya (1983) were among the first to observe (. . .) the centrality of the Holocaust as the primary political myth of Israeli society, the symbol of Israel's present condition and the one which provides Israel with legitimacy and the right to its land. (. . .) Its memory is omnipresent, cutting across differences in age, education and even country of origin (pp. 137–138).

This observation appears even more compelling today. The Holocaust is a predominant issue in all areas of Israeli social and cultural life, including literature (Feldman, 1992), film (Gertz, 2004), visual arts (Katz-Freiman, 2003), and even humor (Zandberg, 2006). A comprehensive account of the Holocaust in current Israeli life is beyond the scope of this article, but a number of examples can demonstrate this point.

*Daily mentions in the media.* Rinkevich-Pave (2008) calculated how often the word Holocaust (*Shoah* in Hebrew) appeared in 12 months (October 2007–September 2008) in *Haaretz*, a leading Israeli newspaper. She compared this historical event with the number of mentions of the term *Israeli–Arab conflict* (in different versions such as Israeli/Jewish/Palestinian conflict), the major issue Israeli society confronts day in and day out. The term *Holocaust* appeared 132 times, on average, every month, and *Israeli–Arab conflict* appeared roughly the same number of times (140 times being the monthly average).

*New Hebrew Holocaust titles.* According to the National Library of Israel's (2011) statistics, books related to the Holocaust are the largest thematic category of newly published Hebrew titles, even more than titles related to the Israeli–Arab conflict and wars, the second most prevalent category.

*In the Israeli school curriculum.* In 1980, an amendment to the State Education Law defined “Holocaust and Heroism awareness” as one of the official goals of the state educational system. Seventy-six percent of the high school students in a recent survey indicated that “the Holocaust affects their world view,” and 94% stated that they “are committed to preserving the memory of the Holocaust” (Cohen, 2010).

*Holocaust remembrance day (Yom haShoah).* Since the 1960s, Yom haShoah has been an official memorial day in Israel. A siren is sounded throughout the country for 2 minutes in the morning, during which all activities in Israel come to a complete halt and the entire public stands at silent attention. All places of entertainment are closed, media programming is devoted exclusively to the Holocaust, and ceremonies are conducted in schools, military bases, and

public places (see Ben-Amos & Bet-El, 1999). Since 2005, International Holocaust Remembrance day is also officially commemorated on January 27.

*Organized trips to Holocaust sites.* Every year since 1988, 10,000 Israeli high school students accompanied by Holocaust survivors embark on intensive 8-day trips to death camps and other Holocaust sites, mainly in Poland (see Bilewicz & Jaworska, 2013; Feldman, 2008; Hazan, 2001). The rate of participation on these trips is remarkable. Although they are voluntary and their costs are mostly paid for by the students' families, about 16% of the entire cohort every year participates, and there is constant public pressure to view these trips as a basic right of every Israeli youngster (Zelikovitz, 2010).

The Israeli army (IDF) also organizes trips for thousands of officers every year to the death camps in Poland. One of the prime goals of this project, called *Witnesses in Uniform*, is "strengthening the sense of commitment of the commander to the State of Israel as a democratic state and to the Jewish people" (Edim Be-madim, 2011).

*The Holocaust presence scale.* Rinkevich-Pave (2008) conducted a survey study among 378 Jewish Israelis (245 women, 133 men), ranging in age from 18 to 71. The highly diverse sample included respondents from all over Israel, from different ethnic backgrounds, people of different socioeconomic status and levels of religious observance. About two thirds of the respondents had no direct family ties to the Holocaust. The respondents were presented with 27 specific behaviors and attitudes reflecting the place of the Holocaust (if at all) in their personal lives. For each of these items they were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. Table 1 lists the 18 most widespread attitudes or behaviors, with the percentage of those expressing strong and strong to moderate agreement. The items indicating interest in acquiring knowledge about the Holocaust were endorsed by most interviewees. In addition, more than half of the respondents also indicated that they found themselves occasionally contemplating how they would have behaved during the Holocaust, that the Holocaust affects their attitudes and beliefs, that they are afraid the Holocaust could happen again, and that many events in the news make them mull over it.

Together with findings reported by Oron (1993) and Cohen (2010), these data suggest the ubiquity of the Holocaust in Israeli life, not just in the public but also in the private sphere (see also Schuman, Vinitzky-Seroussi, & Vinokur, 2003).

### *Perceptions of the Holocaust in the First Postwar Decades in Israel*

Numerous historians and social scientists have dealt with perceptions of the Holocaust in Israel and how it has affected Israelis (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2007; Grodzinsky, 2004; Liebman & Don-Yihya, 1983; Ofer, 1996, 2009; Segev, 2000; Shapira,

**Table 1.** Items from the Holocaust Presence Scale

	Strong agreement (%)	Strong to moderate agreement (%)
On Holocaust remembrance day (Yom HaShoah) I make sure to watch the programs on television about the Holocaust.	51.1	78
I consider myself to have a lot of knowledge about the Holocaust.	38.1	81
I think about how I would have behaved if I had found myself in certain situations that happened during the Holocaust.	35.8	78
It is important for me to meet people who experienced the Holocaust in order to hear their stories.	35.8	68
When I think of the Holocaust I feel that it overwhelms me emotionally.	32.4	69
I have a habit of going to Holocaust museums in Israel or outside of Israel (Yad VaShem, Anne Frank's house, etc.).	32.3	62.7
When I see elderly people, I ask myself if they were in the Holocaust.	31.7	61.3
When I am in Europe, I think about the Holocaust.	31.7	62.5
The Holocaust affects my beliefs and attitudes on different issues.	28.5	63
I am afraid the Holocaust will be repeated.	26.6	54.6
Because of the Holocaust it is hard for me to visit countries like Germany and Austria.	24.7	43
I often choose to watch movies and plays related to the Holocaust.	23.9	50
Because of the Holocaust, I don't take being alive for granted.	22.3	47.6
Many events in the news make me think about the Holocaust.	17.9	56
The Holocaust comes into my thoughts, both when I intend to and when I don't.	16.4	42
Sometimes I feel that the memory of the Holocaust influences my behavior.	14.7	48.5
The memory of the Holocaust causes me to worry more about the security and future of my children.	14.4	48.5
When I think about the future, I sometimes have thoughts about the Holocaust.	12.5	30.6

1998; Yablonka, 1999; Zertal, 2005; Zuckerman, 1993). As noted by Shapira (1989), from 1945 until the 1961 Eichmann trial the Holocaust was not a defining feature of Israeli collective identity. Israelis who were not survivors “knew and did not know about the Holocaust; ached and did not ache given the disaster” (p. 325). Perceptions of the Holocaust at that time were mainly governed by the conceptions, capacities, and needs of the newly founded State. They were filtered through three partially overlapping prisms: the traditional (Jewish) perspective, the Zionist perspective, and the perspective of the Israeli–Arab conflict.

*The traditional (Jewish) perspective.* Jewish historical remembrance stretches back thousands of years and is replete with memories of historical calamities, persecution, exile, deportations, and pogroms. According to this perspective, the biblical Pharaoh, Amalek, and Haman of Persia all attempted to annihilate the Jewish people, followed by a long sequence of enemies, massacres, deportations, inquisitions, and pogroms characterizing Jewish history. Through the Jewish prism, the Holocaust is the latest in this series of catastrophes (see Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992; Hareven, 1983).

*The Zionist perspective.* From the Zionist perspective (the most dominant ideology in Israel), the Holocaust was the ultimate (albeit tragic) testimony of the impossibility of Jewish life in the Diaspora, and proof of the Zionist ideology that Israel was the only way to ensure Jewish existence. This point of view, however, cast retrospective blame on the Holocaust victims and the survivors who failed to come to Israel when this was still possible. From this perspective, the Holocaust confirmed and even reinforced the image of Diaspora Jews who went to their death “like sheep to the slaughter” (e.g., Zertal, 2005).

*The nation building and conflict framework.* After WWII, the struggle for a Jewish state in Palestine was immediately rekindled. Consequently, the perception of the Holocaust became to a large extent subordinated to the needs of the nation-building process and the ensuing Israeli–Arab conflict. Most of the energy of both veteran Israelis and the incoming survivors was channeled to the pressing issues of the present. The survivors, who arrived in Israel amidst the 1948 war, fought side by side local Israelis and shed their blood for their new country (Yablonka, 1999). The Holocaust in Europe was portrayed soon after its occurrence as something of the past with little relevance to the challenging present (Shapira, 1998). In addition, for Israelis enmeshed in a difficult war with the entire surrounding Arab world, dwelling too much upon the massive extermination of Jews in Europe just several years earlier would have been highly intimidating. One way of distancing the terrifying implications of the Holocaust was to portray it as the *antithesis* of the Israeli condition. The Holocaust was possible—so went the reassuring, popular account—because Diaspora Jews were unarmed, unprepared, and unwilling to fight; Israelis, on the other hand, are fully armed, well-prepared, and heroic.

*The grand dichotomies in Holocaust discourse.* Holocaust perception in Israel during the postwar years was governed by two powerful dichotomies. One was “Holocaust and Heroism” (Ofer, 2009; Stauber, 2007; Zertal, 2005). Heroism during the Holocaust referred mainly to the Ghetto and concentration camps uprisings. The small group of Ghetto fighters was symbolically separated from

the rest of the victims. The Israeli postwar public mainly wanted to hear the story of the fighters and not that of other survivors (Shapira, 1989).

The other dichotomy was “from Holocaust to Rebirth,” conveying the notion that the Holocaust led to rebirth of the sovereign state of Israel. Thus, the creation of Israel was seen as compensation for the great loss of the Holocaust. Some survivors may have found some limited consolation in this idea, but its main aim was giving the creation of Israel as equal symbolic weight as the Holocaust.

Thus, the Holocaust was perceived through several abstract and simplifying conceptual prisms. It instantly became a historical event that had happened to the “Jewish people” (in the traditional framework), or to the “Jews of the Diaspora” (in the Zionist and national frameworks). This created a sharp distinction between what was “there” in the Diaspora (Holocaust) and what is “here” (Heroism and Rebirth). The testimonies of the survivors were largely absent from these pictures and little if at all sought after.

#### *The Encounter of Israeli Society with the Survivors*

The encounter of Israeli society with Holocaust survivors was a complex issue (Yablonka, 1999). The great reluctance or inability to hear the survivors’ stories in the first postwar decades is well-documented (e.g., Segev, 2000; Zertal, 2005). Shapira (1998) wrote: “. . . the veterans chose not to ask . . . The new immigrants preferred not to speak . . . then the big silence set in” (p. 51). This imposed silence was by no means unique to Israeli society. Danieli (1982, 1984) observed a conspiracy of silence in survivors’ families in America and even survivors’ dealings with mental health professionals (see also Solomon, 1995).

*Blaming the survivors.* In addition to being sometimes blamed for not coming to Palestine when this was still possible and for not openly fighting their persecutors, the survivors had to face another painful question: “How did you survive?” This question was motivated by a negative and ill-informed stereotype of the survivors: that the better and moral people were the first to perish, and that those who survived were selfish and unscrupulous (Segev, 2000). Thus, for the general Israeli public there was a negative aura surrounding the survivors, which increased their tendency not to talk about their experiences.

#### *The Merging of the Holocaust with the Core Israeli Identity*

How was Holocaust transformed from a Diaspora reality into an Israeli event? And how was it transformed from an event that was irrelevant and even contradictory to the new Israeli identity to one of the major components of the Israel heritage and identity? In the following we first discuss the internalization of the Holocaust, starting with the Eichmann trial, and continue with the impact of the

survivors and their offspring on Israeli society. Next, we discuss the effects of the recurring Arab–Israeli wars and the growing geopolitical threats, which led to an erosion of the belief that Israeli heroism is an ultimate safeguard to survival and made the Holocaust closer to the Israeli concerns.

### *The Internalization of the Holocaust*

*The Eichmann trial.* The 1961 Eichmann trial in Jerusalem is generally considered one of the major turning points in the way that Israelis perceived the Holocaust (e.g., Segev, 2000; Shapira, 1998; Yablonka, 2004). Over one hundred Holocaust survivors testified at the trial, turning it into a classroom for the entire Israeli public (who listened intensively to the radio trial’s broadcasts) and serving as a form of “national group therapy” (Segev, 2000, p. 351). The trial also showed officially that Israel recognized the Holocaust as part of its heritage. Perhaps most importantly, the personal stories of the survivors underlined the human dimensions of the Holocaust. The trial provided Israelis with a new understanding of the great human strength and courage demanded of people just to survive in the ghetto and camps. The allegations regarding the paucity of physical resistance, so prevalent before the trial, gradually subsided (Ofer, 2010).

*The growing impact of the survivors on Holocaust awareness.* Over the years, the survivors played a greater role in shaping Israeli Holocaust memory. They founded museums and Holocaust memorial institutions, academic and teaching programs. In later years, many survivors volunteered to be “witnesses” telling their personal stories on commemoration days in the media, schools, and army camps. Survivors became visible as writers, poets, painters, sculptors, musicians, stage, and cinema artists (see Ofer, 2009).

*The second and third generations.* The term “second generation” was first used by clinical psychologists looking for signs of secondary trauma among the offspring of Holocaust survivors. In general, little evidence was found in this regard (van Ijzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Sagi-Schwartz, 2003). However, members of the second (and third) generation became significant carriers of the Holocaust legacy and memory (Vardi, 1992). The impact of second and third-generation authors, educators, and artists on public life is massive (e.g., Milner, 2003). With the changing social climate in Israel, many of them introduced more humanistic and universalistic tones into Holocaust discourse in Israel, and some were critical of the “nationalization” of the Holocaust (Gutwein, 2009). Above all, with their unquestioned native Israeli identity they have contributed to the perception of the Holocaust as an integral part of Israeli life. Thus, the (Diaspora) Holocaust became “our Holocaust” (see Gutfreund, 2007).

*The Effects of Recurring Wars and Existential Threats*

The Holocaust discourse in Israel reveals a fundamental Israeli existential paradox: Israelis commonly argue that the Holocaust happened because Jews failed to come to Palestine at the time and that the Diaspora can never be a safe place for Jews. At the same time, Israelis are painfully aware of the fact that Israel is one of the least safe places for Jews today. Initially, this paradox was conceptually resolved by the assertion that Israeli independence, military strength, and readiness to fight (allegedly absent in Diaspora life) is the ultimate safeguard of Israel's survival, even in a hostile environment. However, this belief has frequently been shaken over the years. Shapira (1998) described the role of the Six-Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kipur War of 1973 in changing the relation of Israel to the Holocaust. The Six-Day War is remembered as a swift and glorious Israeli victory over its Arab neighbors, but this war was preceded by a 3-week waiting period in which Israelis and Jews all over the world listened with much trepidation to Arab public statements that they were determined to "wipe Israel off the map," "drive the Jews into the sea," etc. (Novick, 1999, p. 148). For Israelis, "the sense of helplessness, of there being no way out, that had hitherto been identified only with the Holocaust and life in exile was seen now as being possible in the free Jewish state as well" (Shapira, 1998, p. 41). The Yom Kipur War, 6 years later, further contributed to the erosion of the dichotomy between "there" and "here."

The 1991 Gulf War provided Israelis with yet another demonstration of their basic geopolitical vulnerability. Although Israel was not directly involved in the Gulf crisis, the Iraqis (led by Saddam Hussein) launched missiles directed at Israeli cities. To defend citizens against possible chemical warfare, all Israelis were hurriedly provided with gas masks and syringe with an antidote against nerve gas, and were instructed to seal a room in the house and wear the gas masks when sirens were sounded. Although the number of casualties was minimal, it undermined life in Israel for 6 weeks. Unlike previous wars, this was an antiheroic war, directed only at the population with no Israeli military response. Family members sat together in the "sealed rooms" in their (now unsafe) homes, waiting for the daily strike and fearing gas attacks. Many left their homes to seek refuge in the less vulnerable Israeli periphery. The association with the Holocaust became almost inescapable, and it was indeed formulated excessively. To top this association, Israelis were angered that Western companies, many of them German, were selling Iraq war materials, including deadly chemicals. References to Europe in the past were abundant (Zuckerman, 1993). The intimate encounter with fear, the sight of thousands of Israelis fleeing Tel-Aviv, and the relatively calm reactions of Holocaust survivors made the dichotomy between the "fearful Holocaust Jews" and the "brave new Israelis" obsolete (Porat, 2008).

More recently, the developing Iranian nuclear capability has increasingly captured Israeli fears and anxieties. The ghastly term "second Holocaust" now

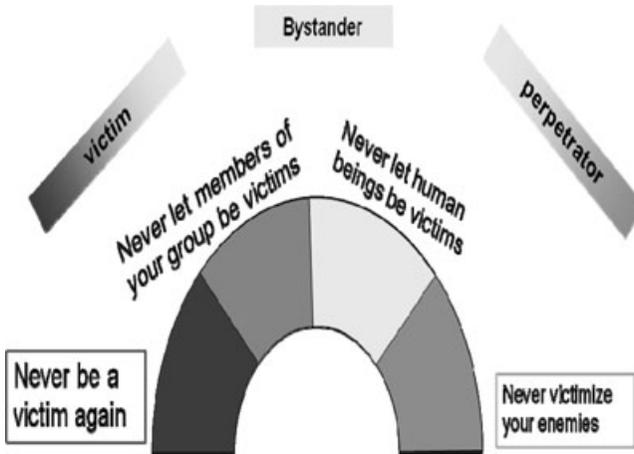


Fig. 1. Four different lessons that former victims may draw from their past victimization.

appears frequently in the media and in private conversations (e.g., Morris, 2007). Studies show that the Israeli public views Iran as an existential danger for the survival of Israel and that Iranian nuclear capabilities are perceived as an extreme danger (Ben Meir & Shaked, 2007). It is also noteworthy that 80% of those questioned by Rinkevich-Pave (2008) endorsed the view that “Most Arab people have not accepted the existence of Israel and would destroy us if they could.” For many Israelis the Holocaust does not seem merely an issue of the past (e.g., Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992).

### *The Four Conflicting Voices of the Holocaust*

What are the personal and collective lessons that Israelis draw from the Holocaust? Historian Yehuda Bauer suggested adding three additional commandments to the original Ten Commandments relating to the Holocaust and other genocides: “Thou shalt not be a victim, thou shalt not be a perpetrator, but, above all, thou shalt not be a bystander” (2002, p. 67). Inspired by these moral imperatives, we devised Figure 1, which is descriptive rather than prescriptive, and presents four different lessons (or voices) that individuals and groups targeted by a human-perpetrated calamity such as the Holocaust may draw from the events. The first and second voices, *never to be a victim again*, and *never to forsake other members of the group when they are in jeopardy*, are the more particularistic voices focusing on the protection of members of one’s own group. The third and fourth voices, *never to be a passive bystander when other human are in jeopardy*, and *never to become a victimizer yourself* are the more universalistic voices, shifting

the focus of protection to outgroup members and even to one's enemies or rivals. These four voices are somewhat incompatible with each other in that protecting another group member, nongroup members and enemies may detract from one's own self-preservation.

*First Voice: Never Be a Passive Victim Again*

This is perhaps the most dominant Holocaust voice for most Israelis (see also Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992; Elon, 1971; Hareven, 1983). For example, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the nation on Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2010, saying: "In every generation there are those who stand against us. And in this generation we must fortify our strength and independence so that we will be able to prevent the current enemy from carrying out its plan" (Netanyahu, 2010).

For most Israelis, building military strength is the prime lesson of the Holocaust and this connection is often symbolically reinforced. For example, when the first Israeli female fighter pilot was qualified, the media emphasized that she was the granddaughter of two of the most revered leaders of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising (Gross, 2001). In 2003 the Israeli Air force organized a ceremonial flyover of the Auschwitz death camp. The three jets were flown by six pilots, all descended from Holocaust survivors (O'Sullivan, 2003). Visitors at the office of General Meir Dagan, the former head the Mosad (the Israeli intelligence agency), could see a photograph of an old Jew standing next to a trench, a rifle aimed at him by an SS officer. "This old Jew was my grandfather," said Dagan. "We should be strong, use our brain, and defend ourselves so that the Holocaust will never be repeated" (cited in Mahnaimi, 2010).

*Second Voice: Never Forsake Your Brothers*

A second voice that originates from Holocaust memory revolves around the Biblical question of "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9). After the Holocaust, the veteran Israeli community was left with troubling questions regarding its own conduct during the Holocaust years. Had they done everything they could have done to save their brethren? (Segev, 2000). The sense of shame and guilt was coupled with the conviction that the Holocaust was possible because the Jews had no homeland, and almost no country in the world was willing to give them shelter. Therefore, the 1950 Israeli *Law of Return* summarized immigration policy in one line: "Every Jew has the right to come to this country as an *ole* (i.e. Jew immigrating to Israel)." Acting on this commitment, Israel took in almost 700,000 Jewish immigrants in its first 3 years. In some cases entire communities were airlifted to Israel in what looked like a semimilitary rescue operation, involving top army units. Although urgency in some of these cases was undeniable,

these operations had a powerful symbolic message: “Now we have the ability to rescue Jews in jeopardy and bring them to Israel. Had we had a strong independent Jewish state at the time of the Holocaust, things might have been different.”

*Third Voice: Never Be a Passive Bystander*

The third voice emanating from Holocaust memory (admittedly, less powerfully than the previous two) is related to “You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor” (Leviticus 19:16), an obligation that extends to every human being in jeopardy. Israeli Holocaust memory is accompanied by a sense of moral contempt and outrage toward the bystander nations for their lack of help during the Holocaust (e.g., Firer, 1989). This moral outrage created a need to demonstrate that Israelis have higher humanitarian values than other countries (e.g., Elon, 1971). In the 1960s, Israelis took great pride in the aid and expertise it provided to dozens of new African and Asian countries. In 1977, a group of Vietnamese refugees stranded at sea were refused help from several ships from various countries, except for an Israeli crew. The newly elected Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin (as the first act of his government) granted them Israeli citizenship, comparing their situation to the plight of Jewish refugees seeking refuge during the Holocaust (Hurwitz, 2004).

This humanitarian voice, however, sometimes clashes with other interests. For example, in recent years there has been a stream of thousands of African refugees and work seekers who enter the country through the Egyptian border. Few are granted temporary refugee status (mainly those from Sudan and Eritrea), but many are refused or detained. Israeli governments and the Israeli found themselves in quandary: on the one hand, they are unwilling to grant the refugees permanent status, but on the other hand many Israelis feel that it is impossible for Israel to take steps such as deportation, which elicit associations with the countries that closed their borders to the Jewish refugees at the time of the Holocaust (Derfner, 2008; The Combat Genocide Association, 2008).

*Fourth Voice: Never Be a Perpetrator*

The fourth voice emanating from the Holocaust is the moral obligation not to harm other human beings, even if they are rivals or enemies. This voice is in fact a derivative of the ethical Silver Rule (i.e., “Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you.” see Terry, 2004). Some former victims contemplating on the evil done to them may also bring to mind the ensuing “do not do unto others” clause (e.g., Staub & Vollhardt, 2008; Vollhardt, 2009).

This theme is particularly relevant in the context of the intractable Israeli–Palestinian conflict (for a detailed account see Morris, 1999). While many Israelis view the Israeli actions as legitimate self-defense, others are more critical of Israel’s

role in the conflict. Whereas condemning one's own group or feeling guilt over its deeds is always difficult (Leach, Zeineddine, & Čehajić-Clancy, 2013; Roccas, Klar, & Livitan, 2006; Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006; see also Imhoff, Wohl, & Erb, 2013), it is even more difficult when a group's past victimization (such as the Holocaust) is made salient (Wohl & Branscombe, 2008). Nevertheless, can the memory of the Holocaust make Israelis less tolerant of transgressions perpetrated by Israel? This is sometimes the case. For example, on the seventieth anniversary of the 1938 *Kristallnacht*, the first orchestrated attacks against Jews in Germany and Austria, a letter to the newspaper Haaretz stated: "I was born in Berlin and was three years old when the rioting occurred on Kristallnacht. . . . For me, stories about Kristallnacht necessarily evoke the actions of the Israeli occupation army in the occupied territories" (Spiro, 2008). In Israel, any reference to Nazi Germany in a context critical to Israeli conduct instantaneously enrages the Israeli public. Consequently, many critical responses to Israeli policies toward Palestinians make use of less specific references, such as "it is reminiscent of dark periods in history" (e.g., Blatman, 2010).

Yet, the Holocaust memory may evoke protest against groups' moral violations. A recent sociological study of women's protest and human right movements in Israel (such as *Women in Black* and *Makhsom Watch*) found an unusually high representation of second-generation women and even Holocaust survivors in their eighties. A common reason for joining these activities expressed in these studies was the fear of becoming passive bystanders "like the Germans" (Benski & Katz, 2013). Activist women said that although it is impossible to compare the Holocaust to the situation in the occupied territories, "we would desecrate the memory of the Holocaust if we did not compare the processes leading to it" (Saar, 2008).

This particular Holocaust influence is also evident in protest activities of younger Israelis. For example, Yehuda Shaul, the founder of *Breaking the Silence*, a grassroots group of veteran Israeli soldiers "working to raise awareness about the daily reality in the occupied territories" told about the army experiences that led him to found the group:

When we entered Hebron we realized the settlers could do whatever they wanted and no one would stop them. . . . There is a huge ideological gap between me and a person who can walk up to an Arab's door and spray paint the Star of David or write "Arabs out". The historical memory is unnerving. We all know what symbols did to Jews' storefronts and whose symbols those were. We all know the writing when "Arabs" is replaced with "Jews". We know this history. (Justvision, 2008)

### *Connecting Past Group Trauma to Current Conflicts: Experimental Demonstrations*

Schori-Eyal, Klar, and Roccas (2013) conducted several studies on the Holocaust "voices." Related to the first voice, they conceptualized the *perpetual*

*ingroup victimhood orientation* (PIVO), the belief that one's group is persecuted continually by different enemies (see also Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992; Vollhardt, 2009; Wohl & Branscombe, 2008). PIVO involves a sense of ongoing threat that links past and present. Contemporary enemies are experienced as a reincarnation of former adversaries. High levels of PIVO involve a strong belief in the uniqueness of the group's trauma, unparalleled by the painful experiences of any other group, and a strong sense of mistrust of outgroups. The construct was measured using a 12-item scale (e.g., *All our enemies throughout history share a common denominator—the will to annihilate us*). This scale was tested on multiple samples and was found to have high reliability. Before answering the questionnaire, respondents were asked to recall an event in which the ingroup was harmed by another group. The most commonly mentioned event (mentioned by 40–50% of respondents, depending on the sample) was the Holocaust.

The second construct in these studies was the *fear of victimizing* (FOV), which is related to the fourth voice. This is the fear that due to past suffering, one's group may lose its moral sensitivity to the plight of its adversaries. FOV was measured using a 10-item scale (sample item: *We are in danger of treating other people in the same way that we were treated by our worst enemies*). FOV was also found to have high reliability.

In a series of studies, PIVO and FOV were both found to be associated with a variety of intergroup outcomes, including a sense of moral entitlement, group-based guilt, behavioral tendencies, and cognitive processes. PIVO was positively correlated and FOV negatively correlated with a sense of moral entitlement: the belief that one's group is allowed to do anything in self-defense, even commit acts that can be considered moral transgressions (e.g., *Harming innocents is certainly justified when our existence is being threatened*). Moral entitlement was shown to mediate the relationship between PIVO as well as FOV and outcome variables such as group-based guilt and moral decision making: the higher the sense of moral entitlement, the less group-based guilt was experienced over harm caused to enemy outgroup members and the greater the support was for actions that result in severe damage to outgroup civilians (Schori-Eyal et al., 2013). The results indicate that the Holocaust still plays a role in Jewish–Israelis' attitudes, emotions, and behavioral tendencies in relation to current conflicts. The first voice (“never be a victim again”) as reflected by PIVO is associated with greater willingness to engage in morally questionable actions against enemy outgroup members and lessened group-based guilt over the results of such actions (see also Wohl & Branscombe, 2008). In contrast, FOV, which reflects the fourth voice (“never be a perpetrator”), is associated with greater moral sensitivity and greater group-based guilt.

PIVO and FOV were also found to affect several cognitive processes such as memory and categorization. In one study (Schori-Eyal, 2013), participants were asked to categorize national-ethnic groups according to two criteria: a neutral

criterion and a “hostility” criterion (whether or not the group was hateful toward Israel). PIVO was associated with categorizing more outgroups as hostile and with shorter response times when using the hostility criterion compared to the neutral criterion. The higher the level of PIVO, the longer it took participants to declare a group “non-hostile.”

In other studies (Schori-Eyal, 2011), participants read descriptions of historical persecution and attacks against ingroup members. They were then presented with several open-ended stories describing ambiguous social interactions between ingroup and outgroup members, followed by three endings for each story, representing either hostile, neutral, or benevolent intentions of the outgroup actors. With higher levels of PIVO, participants tended to attribute more hostile intentions to outgroup members in these situations. When reminded of historical group trauma, high-PIVO participants attributed more negative intentions to outgroup members compared to the unreminded group. Low-PIVO participants reminded of historical group trauma attributed fewer hostile intentions to outgroup members. Thus, the “first voice” (operationalized by the PIVO measure) affects the way intergroup interactions are interpreted, and increases the attribution of hostile intentions to outgroup members.

PIVO and FOV are both associated with memory biases in intergroup conflict. In the study by Schori-Eyal et al. (2013), participants read about the plight of a family in Gaza whose home was hit by an IDF missile, and were later asked to recall the text and answer a series of questions. The higher the level of PIVO was, the less accurately participants recalled details of information they had read earlier. Both details of the damage and trivial information were affected, indicating that PIVO acted as a filter that deflected participants’ attention to all types of information about the outgroup. In contrast, the higher FOV was, the more accurately the information about the Palestinian family was recalled.

These studies indicate that the “never be a victim again” voice is associated with a perception of rival outgroups as hostile, and with downplaying damage to outgroup members. The “never be a victimizer” voice, on the other hand, is related to a more accurate perception of the suffering of other groups (see also Vollhardt, 2013).

In another study (Schori-Eyal, 2011), participants were subliminally primed with either a neutral stimulus or a reminder of group trauma (swastika). They then completed a measure of group-based guilt toward the Palestinians. High but not low PIVO participants experienced *less* group-based guilt when primed with group trauma compared with a neutral prime. High but not low FOV participants experienced *more* group-based guilt when primed with group trauma compared with the neutral prime. These findings indicate that implicit reminders of trauma may strengthen each of the two voices. If the perception of eternal victimhood is predominant, subliminal reminders of trauma reinforce this belief, resulting in less group-based guilt about harming others. If fear of victimizing is predominant,

subliminal reminders of trauma increase this perception, resulting in more group-based guilt.

### Conclusion

Israelis (those who did not experience the Holocaust personally) very slowly and reluctantly acknowledged the Holocaust as part of their collective identity. For them, the Holocaust represented the ultimate realization of the tragic Jewish destiny in the Diaspora, the destiny they had sought to break away from. The social and historical processes by which the Holocaust was gradually turned into a core feature in the Israeli identity are complex and multilayered, and we could only briefly touch here upon some of them. Time was involved in several processes, such as the growing impact of the survivors on Holocaust awareness, and the role of second and third generations who were born in Israel yet unashamed in their Holocaust heritage. Israel's difficult geopolitical situation and the recurring wars also had enormous effects on the continued impact of the Holocaust on Israeli collective identity. One dominant voice of the Holocaust is to *Never be a victim again*, which many Israelis learned to identify as a source of resilience and inventiveness. And there are also the other Holocaust voices urging group members to become better human beings and, even more difficult, to refrain from victimizing other groups. These different voices are often incongruent and disharmonic. It seems that the future vitality of the Israeli society—and probably of any other society that survives massive trauma—greatly depends on how well these voices will be orchestrated and played.

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