

Holocaust

energetic and efficient, simply presuming universality as they focus on goal-oriented individualism, economic success and consumerism, and superficial optimism. Such qualities are recognizably American to audiences outside the United States, where they are encountered as culturally distinct and different (Maltby 2004). The openness of Hollywood films to a variety of cultural readings makes them an unusual kind of national cinema. Film industries in many countries are supported by quotas on movie imports and receive direct government funding. They are often also required to produce national identity through their films and abide by rules concerning depictions of their country. Hollywood has no such responsibility. Hollywood instead lobbies for laws and international agreements related to intellectual property licensing and piracy enforcement, access to trade markets and local partnerships, and financial repatriation of profits. Hollywood, moreover, has never been coterminous with American cinema. The United States has always produced a diverse and varied body of film beyond Hollywood, including documentaries, experimental cinema, independent narrative and art films, and cinemas of diasporic and minority cultures (Martin 1995).

Hollywood's interplay with the rest of world may best be characterized through the idea of entanglement (Govil 2015). Hollywood may circulate as a kind of national cinema, but Hollywood's filmmakers see their work as universal. Hollywood has developed the world's most widely imitated film style, which is designed to efface itself. National cinemas around the world define themselves (their style, narrative, and intent) in opposition to Hollywood. Hollywood, meanwhile, has a long, promiscuous history of investing in, coproducing with, and regularly appropriating from national cinemas around the world. Hollywood has taken styles, ideas, locations, and especially talent (writers, directors, actors) from other countries, yet has retained a consistency in overall style, structure, and process. For all the legal, cultural, and nationalistic resistance to Hollywood, millions of people around the world rush to see the next Hollywood blockbuster. All of this, as well, must be collected under the sign of "Hollywood."

SEE ALSO *Disney; The Quiet American (Graham Greene, 1955); Television*

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HOLOCAUST

From 1933 to 1945 Germany was ruled by the totalitarian fascist regime of the Nazi party under Adolf Hitler. During the Nazi era Jews and other groups faced persecution, violence, and death. This article uses the term *Holocaust* to refer to the slaughter of six million Jews throughout Europe (and to a lesser extent in North Africa) between 1933 and 1945, and in particular as a result of the Final Solution, a deliberate, systematic plan carried out by this regime between 1941 and 1945. Though the

term Holocaust views events across Europe and over several years as a collective whole, it is also important to note that these events unfolded quite differently in various regions, and local sociopolitical factors heavily influenced persecution of Jews and other groups. This article focuses on American responses to the Holocaust after 1945, including the meaning of the Holocaust for Jews and non-Jews and debate over whether or not Jewish suffering during that time period was unique.

In the wake of the Holocaust, approximately 100,000 Jews immigrated to the United States, in addition to just over 300,000 non-Jewish displaced persons. Many survivors went to Israel, either for ideological reasons or because they had not received permission to enter other countries, including the United States. However, the significance of the Holocaust has greatly exceeded the numerical expansion of the American population by its refugees and survivors. The Holocaust has increasingly been a major question for and expression of Jewish identity in America. In the 2013 Pew Research Poll “A Portrait of Jewish Americans,” 73 percent of those polled listed “remembering the Holocaust” as essential to being Jewish, making it the most common response. Furthermore, many non-Jews have insisted on connecting the event to American history and values.

Prior to and during World War II, Jewish and non-Jewish Americans tended to see Jews as one group among many victims. Disabled people, perceived enemies of the state, homosexuals, and religious, ethnic, and national groups including Sinti and Roma, Poles, and Jehovah’s Witnesses were all persecuted during this period. Americans learned of the persecution of Jews in Germany, Austria, and other countries, but news of the forcing of Jews into ghettos, the *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing squads) in Eastern Europe, and the death camps emerged only gradually. Reports during and immediately following the war of the camps, such as Chełmno, Majdanek, Bełżek, Sobibór, Treblinka, and Auschwitz-Birkenau, referenced their specific history, location, and inhabitants. A shift toward conceptualizing the “Holocaust” as a larger event took place as Americans began to see a relationship between various camps and events. This generalization made it possible to interpret the Holocaust as a single event in collective memory. The opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1993 on the National Mall in Washington, DC, represented the culmination of the centralization of the Holocaust in American consciousness. The museum locates the Holocaust within the American landscape and is part of a long process of questioning the meaning and implications of the Holocaust in American communities, religion and philosophy, media, education, and politics.

EARLY RESPONSES

Prior to the emergence in 1960 of a public narrative about the Holocaust, Jewish Americans struggled to understand the events in Western and Eastern Europe of the Nazi era. There were no models for memorializing destruction on this scale, no clear way to integrate the knowledge of what happened into Jewish consciousness. Jewish Americans experimented with language and forms of remembrance. The word “Holocaust” appeared in English-language memorials, from museum exhibits to scholarship, in the 1940s and 1950s, though it was not the only term used. “Holocaust” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew term *‘olah*, from the Hebrew root meaning “to go up” and referring (in some contexts) to a burnt sacrifice to God. In Jewish antiquity, it was believed that when humans made a sacrifice or *‘olah*, the smoke rose and the odor pleased God. The use of “Holocaust” for the death of six million Jews is thus problematic for some because it implies a sacrifice that pleases God.

Jewish Americans used terms in English, Yiddish, and Hebrew, from Hitler *tsaytn* (“Hitler times”) to variations of *khurban* (destruction), which is also used to describe the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem in antiquity. Some used names of camps to stand in for the entire time period, especially “Dachau” during the early postwar years, though “Auschwitz” would become more frequently used in the late twentieth century. In such cases, the use of a single camp as a symbol can obscure the diversity of events and methods of killing. In the American press, journalists used terms such as “the six million,” “the catastrophe,” “Hitler holocaust,” and “victims of Nazi persecutions.” Jewish Americans spoke of “survivors,” “the remnant,” “the saving remnant,” and “displaced persons.” In Israel and among some Jewish Americans, the term used to refer to the deaths of the six million was and remains the *Shoah*, a Hebrew word meaning a total calamity.

Many attempts by Jewish Americans to create memorials, such as days of remembrance or public installations, failed due to bureaucratic and political obstacles as well as lack of funding. Memorials in the United States arose in different political and cultural contexts from those in Europe, where the sites of destruction were located. The State of Israel created Yad Vashem as its official memorial to the Holocaust, while seeking to overturn Jewish suffering as the foundation for a national narrative. Americans had to decide how to integrate narratives of the Holocaust not only into American history but also American landscapes. Jewish Americans were influenced by European and Israeli narratives, and participated in them by sending money abroad to support refugees as well as memorials. Jews in America faced the question of how much to allow the

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State of Israel to control the narrative of Jewish history, including but not limited to the Holocaust. The Yad Vashem institution sought to prevent Jewish Americans from creating any memorials in the United States, but Jewish Americans went ahead with local and international projects such as erecting monuments, participating in rituals such as burials of Torah scrolls, and writing and publishing books, especially *yizker bikher*, memorial books that commemorated Jewish life in towns throughout Europe.

Jewish Americans also considered several possibilities for designating a single day of remembrance. Some advocated the ninth of the Hebrew month of Av, the traditional day of mourning for the destruction of the First and Second Temples; ultimately the Synagogue Council of America rejected this day as much for practical reasons (it fell during the summer, when many are traveling) as any theological ones. In 1951 the Israeli Knesset approved the twenty-seventh of Nisan as Yom Ha-Shoah U'Mered HaGetaot (the Day of Catastrophe and Ghetto Rebellion). This date linked Jewish resistance—in particular the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising—to remembrance. American observance of what came to be known more succinctly as Yom Ha-Shoah demonstrates the simultaneous but sometimes conflicting Jewish American goals of remembering the suffering of Jews in Europe and participating in contemporary Jewish life, especially establishing connections with the State of Israel. Jewish Americans also integrated remembrance of the six million into their observance of Passover.

COMMUNAL MEMORY, MEDIA, AND POLITICS

The collective Holocaust consciousness that developed in Jewish American communal memory was influenced by the publication of key works of Jewish literature; the trial in Jerusalem of one of the main Nazi perpetrators, Adolf Eichmann; Jewish theological and philosophical responses; and images in television and other media.

Key Works of Literature. Two texts in particular have been foundational: *The Diary of Anne Frank* and Elie Wiesel's *Night*. Published in Dutch in 1947, the diary was published in English translation in 1952. It was subsequently adapted for theater and film in the United States. Because of the very nature of the diary, written while in hiding and ending before Anne's deportation to Auschwitz, it provided a view of Jewish persecution under Nazism within a narrow frame. Thus the Holocaust became the context for Frank's diary, with the reader knowing the outcome not only of Anne's life but of so many others, more than its central theme. The book, theater performances, and film emphasized the diary's value to liberal ideals and postwar optimism.

In *Night*, published in English translation in the United States in 1960, Wiesel, an Auschwitz survivor, writes explicitly of Jewish suffering in the death camps. He recalls life in Hungary, deportation to and daily life in Auschwitz, and the loss of his family, ultimately including his father shortly before the liberation of Auschwitz. *Night* emerged within the context of numerous Yiddish-language memoirs of towns destroyed throughout Europe that recalled vibrant Jewish life. By reading the memoirs of individual survivors, Jews in the immediate postwar period began to confront the events of the Holocaust. Many other individual survivors also drafted memoirs in a variety of languages.

The Eichmann Trial and the Six-Day War. Many Jewish Americans did not connect the Holocaust and Zionism during the early 1940s or even immediately after the war ended. Given the ongoing suffering in European displaced persons camps, many Jewish Americans came to view mass immigration to Israel as the best option for the remnants of European Jewry. However, an ideological and nearly theological understanding of the State of Israel as a kind of redemption for the Holocaust did not become widespread until the 1960s.

The Eichmann trial, which took place from April to August 1961 in the Jerusalem District Court, pushed Jewish suffering into a new position in public memory, calling attention to the death of six million Jews as a unique event that must be conceptualized separately from other events during the Second World War. The trial, through which the American public had its first encounter with modern Hebrew, projected an image of national power and Israeli identity, though not even all Israeli citizens or Jews called to testify in the trial could speak or understand Hebrew. Greater numbers of Jewish Americans began to see Israel as responsible for the future of Jewish life, particularly after the 1967 Six-Day War. The perceived unlikely victory of Israel against attack by Arab armies forged a new sense of Israel's strength and righteousness.

Jewish Theology and Philosophy. Religious, theological, and philosophical responses to the Holocaust in North America have responded to the uniqueness of the Holocaust as an event in Jewish and world history and the implications of the Holocaust for a covenantal conception of God. Theodicy, the question of how a good and just God could permit suffering and evil, is a long-standing theme in Jewish and other religious-philosophical works; but for post-Holocaust thinkers, the Holocaust created a particular problem because it elevated these questions to a new level of urgency in the face of such widespread horror. A range of American and

European Jewish theologico-philosophical responses, from ultra-Orthodox to Reform to “secular philosophy,” have produced ongoing and overlapping conversations.

For those using biblical or traditional Jewish sources, certain themes recur: the *Akedah* or “binding of Isaac” in Genesis 22, the book of Job (for examples, see especially the work of Martin Buber and Robert Gordis), the “suffering servant” in Isaiah (Abraham Joshua Heschel, Eliezer Berkovits), *hester panim* or “God hiding God’s Face” in Deuteronomy 31 and Micah 3 (Buber, Joseph Soloveitchik, Zvi Kolitz, Berkovits), *mipnei bateinu* or “on account of our sins” (Joel Teitelbaum, Isaac Hutner), or a theologico-philosophical commitment to free will (Berkovits, Arthur Cohen). More radical responses have also been produced, including arguments that Auschwitz represents a new revelation (Emil Fackenheim); that Jews are now in a new covenantal age (Irving “Yitzchak” Greenberg); that God must be redefined in theological and gendered terms (Hans Jonas, Cohen, Melissa Raphael); that there is no God or no covenant with God, though this does not invalidate Jewish peoplehood (Richard Rubenstein); that traditional theology has been rendered indefensible, but the Holocaust imposes new ethical demands (Emmanuel Levinas, Amos Funkenstein); and that the Holocaust is simply a mystery that cannot be explained (Wiesel, Andre Schwarzbart, Nellie Sachs). Non-Jews, most especially Christians, have also contended with the implications of the Holocaust for theology and religious practice. The Holocaust renders problematic Christian claims of supersessionism, that the new covenant in Christ invalidated the Jewish covenant with God, which some scholars have implicated in the complacency of bystanders, and indeed in the participation of perpetrators, in the execution of so many Jews.

Media. Visual media have played an important role in Americans’ conception of the Holocaust. Of the thousands of images taken by photojournalists and soldiers during the liberation of the death camps, a handful of photos emerged as symbols of the horror. In American television and film, the Holocaust has become a central moral paradigm.

That the Holocaust seeped into American culture beyond specifically Jewish stories underscores the shared interest among Jews and non-Jews in memorializing and understanding its implications. In the middle of the twentieth century, photojournalism and television were still new media that had yet to earn their place as “serious” forms of culture. By consolidating a moral discourse around the Holocaust, photojournalism, television, and film, each able to convey visual information that words could not, each gained a certain status vis-à-vis the Holocaust.

DIFFUSION IN AMERICAN CULTURE

Conceptualizing the Holocaust in America underlines two themes: the victimhood of Jews, and the ability of good to triumph over evil (in particular the ability of American liberalism to save these victims). But if what many take to be the lesson of Anne Frank’s diary is really true, that at heart all humanity is really good, others have been prompted to ask if the Holocaust would then not have happened in the first place. Americans have wrestled repeatedly with these questions, highlighting how deeply responses to the Holocaust in the United States have been embedded in and contributed to American culture.

Since the last quarter of the twentieth century, survivor testimony, film and television, and the construction of monuments in national American settings have continued to diffuse the Holocaust into Jewish and non-Jewish consciousness. The placing of Holocaust monuments and museums in the United States can be viewed as “arbitrary,” in that they are not created on sites of destruction. Holocaust memorials are also created in complex contemporary contexts and Holocaust memory is in tension with many ongoing political questions. For example, President Jimmy Carter’s proposal of a national memorial to the Jewish Holocaust in Washington, DC, followed his sale of fighter planes to Saudi Arabia, and President Bill Clinton’s dedication of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum took place even as he chose not to intervene in the Rwandan genocide. Americans have viewed events from Bosnia to Rwanda to Sudan through the lens of the Holocaust, though it has not always been clear to what ends. If monuments in Washington, New York, Boston, San Francisco, Miami, and many other American cities have connected the Holocaust to American consciousness—albeit in multiple, complex, sometimes unclear or contradictory ways—these museums have also helped each local city legitimize its own significance.

If American monuments tend to centralize lessons of pluralism, this emphasis is not an inevitable lesson of the Holocaust. German memorials address the role of Germans as perpetrators of crimes against Jews, yet also ask how the Jews’ suffering fits into broader national narratives of suffering under Nazism and Communism. Monuments in Poland triangulate the suffering of Jews under fascism, the role of Polish nationalism, and persecutions under Soviet communism. Early monuments in Poland subsumed Jewish deaths under Polish and Communist rubrics, but more recent monuments—inspired heavily by Israeli Jews—have insisted on Jewish particularity, resistance, and even Zionism. In Israel the theme of victimhood and weakness is far less emphasized than that of heroism and strength. Israel’s

image of itself as central to all Jewish identity rests both on the calamity of the Final Solution and on the creation of a self-defending modern Jewish nation-state.

The Jewish interest in educating people about the Holocaust is sometimes in tension with those who question to what extent the Holocaust was unique, pointing to the suffering of other groups. As with many subjects, there is the question of who controls the narrative and who determines what meanings are to be drawn from it. Jews as well as non-Jews will continue to debate the relationship of group identity to a historical record of atrocity.

SEE ALSO *Armenian Genocide; Ethnic Cleansing; Genocide; Human Rights; Israel; Judaism; Roosevelt, Franklin D.; United Nations; Universal Declaration of Human Rights; World War II*

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HOLY LAND

Many Americans use the term “Holy Land” to refer to the area where they believe most biblical events occurred, including the life of Jesus—roughly, the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. They have also used synonyms such as Palestine, Zion, Canaan, and the Promised Land. This historical conception would today