

## INDUSTRIAL KILLING:

### WORLD WAR I, THE HOLOCAUST, AND REPRESENTATION

by

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Today I would like to present to you some of the major themes of my recently published book, *Murder in Midst: The Holocaust, Industrial Killing, and Representation*.

The book is written in the form of eight interrelated essays which can also be read independently of each other. It sets out to examine and analyze two main theses, as well as to sketch some important links between them. First, it argues for a crucial and largely neglected connection between the Great War of 1914-18 and the Nazi attempted genocide of the Jews. Second, it asserts the existence of a complex relationship between the representation and the enactment of war and genocide in the interwar and postwar periods.

Both theses are based on the argument that the First World War had introduced to the West a wholly new concept of war, which in turn had far-reaching consequences for the understanding of human society and man's ability to control violence and improve humanity -- or at least those parts of humanity deemed valuable. This is what I have termed "industrial killing," namely the mechanized, impersonal, and sustained mass destruction of human beings, organized and administered by states, legitimized and set into motion by scientists and jurists, sanctioned and popularized by academics and intellectuals. To be sure, there were some precedents to industrial warfare before the Great War, and the concept of total war was aired in some quarters prior to 1914. Yet I argue that it was first and foremost the mass slaughter in the trenches which had a direct and long-lasting effect on Europe -- and subsequently on much of the rest of the world -- and that therefore the Great War is crucial to our understanding of many of the characteristics of modern war and genocide as well as their popular perception and representation.

In the first part of the book, "Images of War and the Emergence of Industrial Killing," I am concerned with the effects of the clash between the widespread perceptions and anticipations of war in pre-World War I European society and the realities of modern warfare confronted in 1914. It was this adaptation of image to reality which in turn gave birth to a new conceptualization of war and re-articulated the relationship between violence and modern man, war and human society. The first two chapters of the book take up certain aspects of the links between the trauma of war and the new destructive urge of European society, between fear of personal and collective annihilation and the evolution of a genocidal mentality, all within the context of this new and devastating event of industrial killing.

One important and deeply ironic aspect of this development was that in the process of attempting to salvage the individual, at least as a concept if not as a specific entity, from the annihilating reality of modern warfare, a new concept of total extermination was

forged. War has always created a tension between its representation as an arena in which the individual warrior could display his heroic qualities and its reality of anonymous slaughter where the individual counted for very little. Yet notions of individual heroism and soldierly chivalry persisted in Europe well into the twentieth century. The Great War seemed to totally shatter any illusions regarding individual worth and heroism. Indeed, as the soldiers soon discovered, precisely those actions deemed heroic, and therefore meaningful, which could have provided the warrior with a sense of his own significance, had become both suicidal and counter-productive in the trenches of the Western Front. While the old aristocratic or aristocratically-minded officer corps of European armies was decimated in the first few months of the fighting, the rank and file found themselves confronted with the anonymous forces of modern industrial warfare against whose immense destructive energies they were neither mentally nor materially prepared. Indeed, much of this century's understanding of modernity has been molded by the experience of the industrial killing of the Western Front, which had injected into the progressive, positivist ideals of the nineteenth-century another layer of meaning (or meaninglessness), that of modern society's seemingly unlimited and irrational destructive potential.

The predicament of the individual soldier on the modern battlefield, I argue, was confronted both on the technical, practical level, by inventing and producing new technologies which freed the armies from the fate of being pinned down by the combination of trenches, barbed-wire, machine guns and artillery, and on the representational level, by forging a new ideology and producing a new imagery of heroism and liberation. In the course of the First World War, and throughout the interwar period, the inevitability of a perpetual cycle of industrial killing on an ever greater scale in the future was accepted by all but a small minority of Europeans. The question became, then, not how to prevent a repetition of this phenomenon, but how to master it both militarily and psychologically. In its most extreme form, what emerged was a radical concept of industrial killing, according to which the only way to prevent the annihilation of the individual and the collective to which he belonged was to further perfect the techniques of killing and to more strenuously mold the mind of the individual so as to accomplish the total extermination of the enemy. Since the total war of 1914-18 had already involved much of the nation, including its non-combatant population, the only way to prevent similar destruction in the future was therefore to bring about the total annihilation of those perceived as the nation's enemies, and thereby to assure one's unchallenged control over the means of destruction and domination. Hence the notion of industrial killing was expanded to include what I term "militarized genocide," that is, the extermination of whole populations as part of a new conceptualization of modern war.

It is therefore, I argue, not only impossible to understand the implementation of the "Final Solution" without the context of the Second World War in which it was perpetrated; it is also crucial to understand that the manner in which the Second World War was conducted and the genocidal energies which it unleashed were themselves part of a larger context of a Europe still coming to terms with the trauma of the Great War, the first truly industrial military confrontation in history and the site of industrial killing of millions of soldiers. This is of course the case as far as individual perpetrators are concerned, as well as in terms of the techniques and concepts employed in the death

camps. But it is also important to understand that the preoccupation of Europeans with war and violence during the interwar period, and the representation of industrial, rational, yet meaningless killing in art, fiction, and film, greatly contributed to the articulation of the concept of mass extermination of whole populations and went a long way to mentally prepare the perpetrators and bystanders for its actual enactment .

It should be noted that the omnipresence of war in the European imagination of the interwar period spanned all political and ideological sectors. Moreover, even those works of fiction and film, art and rhetoric, which were accepted at the time and are largely still seen as professing antiwar sentiments were in fact highly ambivalent, expressing a mixture of disgust and fascination, anger and admiration, rejection and adulation of war and its makers, especially the simple soldiers, the most direct victims of their own actions. In examining, for instance, the works of Henri Barbusse and Erich Maria Remarque, side by side with those of Louis-Ferdinand Celine and Ernst Juenger, we are faced with some of the contradictory reactions to this wholly new experience of industrial killing. Thus the pacifist Barbusse strives to find a meaning in the slaughter by presenting it as the dawn of the liberation of the masses, while the antimilitarist Remarque is imbued with the notion of comradeship that was so much part of the myth of the Frontgemeinschaft of the extremist Freikorps and the Nazis. Conversely, as late as 1932 the future collaborationist, anti-Semitic, and pro-Nazi Celine portrayed the Great War as an event of insane mutual slaughter lacking any meaning or significance, symbolizing to his mind the total worthlessness of humanity. Juenger, for his part, despite the fact that his writings provided so much of the imagery of Fascism, described the war as an intensely personal experience and was much less interested in attributing to it any universal meaning.

The ambivalent reactions to the cataclysm of the Great War, the perceived need to endow it with personal, collective, or ideological meaning, and the desire to integrate the slaughter into a comprehensible scheme of universal or individual progress, is at the root of our century's obsession with perpetrating and representing violence. This can be seen also in much of the cinematic universe of the interwar period, which was imbued with images of destruction. Indeed, the films of the 1920s and 1930s very much set the pattern -- which is still with us today -- of combining revulsion from violence with highly aestheticized images of destruction, wrath at the meaninglessness of war and fascination with its perceived essence and all that it brings out in humanity. This is the case, for instance, of Jean Renoir and Abel Gance, just as it is of Georg-Wilhelm Pabst and Fritz Lang, as well as of Lewis Milestone's cinematic rendering of Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. What is striking about Renoir's *The Grand Illusion* and *The Rules of the Game*, for instance, is that while they condemn the last war, they are even more critical of post-1918 society, as is indeed very much Abel Gance's *J'accuse* in both its somewhat different versions of 1918 and 1937. Here the soldiers are both the heroes and the victims, while civilian society both during and after the war is the true culprit, set on unleashing another war which only the soldiers know must be an even greater massacre. The soldiers do not want another war, yet it is only in war that they know true comradeship and devotion, sacrifice and meaning. Indeed, it was, in a sense, only in the trenches that they had really lived, so much so that at a time of emergency they threaten

to rise again and to wipe off the face of the earth all the evil of the postwar world, as they do in *J'accuse* and are called upon to do in *Le feu*. The world of the trenches had exposed the true meaning of life, while the postwar world is so filled with hypocrisy and greed that it takes on the appearance of a soap opera, of foam and bubbles that can be erased with one swipe of the hand, as it is portrayed in *The Rules of the Game*. The illusion was not only that the war would be fought over a field of flowers, but that the postwar world would be just and peaceful. The chivalrous protagonists of *The Grand Illusion* die, while the new, ruthless survivors of the war, those who know no rules but those of the beast, forge the wretched fate of the interwar period.

Nor can there be any hope in technological progress. While in Pabst's *Westfront 1918* the German soldier is finally crushed into pulp by the advancing tanks of the enemy, in Lang's *Metropolis* the machine threatens to take over humanity.

Indeed, Lang's ambivalence about progress and humanity is a particularly good instance of the dark forebodings and deep anxieties of his period. The evil forces lurking in the shadows, so powerfully represented by the child molester and assassin in the film *M*, are conquered through an unlikely coalition of the underworld and the forces of order, the blind (or war mutilated?) and the children. Yet in the face of this alliance, the killer suddenly appears as a victim, a helpless pawn at the mercy of a vindictive world and his own uncontrollable passions. This is a world turned upside down, where the boundaries between perpetrator and victim, innocence and guilt, have been shattered, and the immense power of the mobilized bureaucratic state can be used to any end, good or evil, or break out of its controls completely, lashing out at all and sundry with no apparent purpose. This type of cinematic world is suspended between one apocalypse and another, seemingly transfixed by such images as Milestone's devastating machine-gun burst mowing down scores of men on an open field, the spectators both speechless with horror and fascinated by the superhuman power of the machine as it wipes out humanity at the touch of a finger.

The interwar period abounded with memories and anticipations of a modern, man-made apocalypse, whether in Kafka's *In der Strafkolonie*, Franz Werfel's *Die vierzig Tage des Musa Dagh*, Hugo Bettauer's *Die Stadt ohne Juden*, Karl Kraus' *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*, or Kurt Pinthus' *Menschheitsdaemmerung*; in the drawing and paintings of Otto Dix and George Grosz, the war memoirs of Roland Dorgeles and Siegfried Sasoon, the works and manifestos of the Dadaists and the Futurists. What I would like to stress here is that by the time Europe had become embroiled in yet another world war, it had already created an image of military confrontation as an act of total destruction, frightening and cleansing at the same time, terrifying and yet fascinating and altogether unavoidable. It is with this context in mind that I would like to turn to the second part of my book, which attempts to examine some of the central themes in the histories, memories, and stories of the Holocaust.

The close links between the interpretations of Antisemitism, the Holocaust, and National Socialism, clearly reveal their historiographical interdependence. At the same time, however, the radically different experiences of writers on these issues and of their

chosen historical protagonists make for the extraordinary divergences in representations of the relationship between prejudice, genocide, and Nazism. This can clearly be seen, for instance, in the different names given to the Holocaust in Germany, France, the United States, and Israel. The meanings and implications of calling the event *Judenvernichtung* or genocide, Holocaust or Shoah (or Churban or Pur'anut), should call our attention to the need to investigate the manner in which Auschwitz (or its repression) has molded different national, collective, scholarly and literary representations of the past.

A case in point is that of German history writing on the Nazi period. A good example of the difficulties involved is Andreas Hillgruber's 1986 book *Zweierlei Untergang: Die Zerschlagung des Deutschen Reiches und das Ende des europaischen Judentums* (Double Downfall: The Destruction of the German Reich and the End of European Jewry). There can be little doubt that the two essays included in this thin volume provide ample proof of the inherent tension between empathy and detachment, personal experience and professional identity, politics and scholarship. Thus Hillgruber's text reflects both his perceived need to historicize the past and identify with his protagonists -- as befits any self-conscious Rankean -- and his own wartime experience and exposure to the Nazi rhetoric of the time. Comparing the first essay (on Germany's "destruction") to the second (on the "end" of European Jewry), we can see far more clearly than Hillgruber himself had probably intended that his stress on the historian's need for empathy with his protagonists extends only to his own identity-group, and becomes completely blocked when discussing any other group, especially if it happens to be composed of the former group's victims. This tendency for powerful but selective empathy has, in turn, some interesting implications for other German representations of their past, as will be shown later on.

Some recent works and polemics on the history and memory of the Holocaust reveal the immense difficulty of studying this event. Note, for instance, such recent studies as Christopher Browning's analyses of the bureaucracy, administration, and perpetrators of genocide, Raul Hilberg's and Gordon Horwitz's works on the interaction between victims, murderers, and bystanders, and the essays by Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Alain Finkielkraut, and Lawrence Langer on the crucial role of memory, its repression, and its abuse. When examined side by side, these historical investigations and ruminations seem to suggest that the farther we move away from the event in time, the more important will it become for subsequent studies of the Holocaust to take into account all available forms of representation, and to remain sensitive to the manner in which they mold both the scholar's and the public's image of the Holocaust, as well as more generally of genocide as an inherent phenomenon of our civilization. And yet, while such works enhance our knowledge of specific areas of the Holocaust, their ultimate effect is profoundly troubling. This is because they do not leave us with a sense of greater understanding of the whole; indeed, the profoundly painful "ruins of memory" manifested by survivors in Langer's work remind us that neither we, nor indeed the survivors themselves, can "understand," and that this incomprehension is in many important ways hereditary, passing from one generation to another as a recollection of a horror that could not, and can not be exorcized. Hence *Verstehen*, the ultimate goal of *Einfuehlung*, cannot be achieved, thereby nullifying the very concept of historicization as far as the victims are

concerned. This is all the more disturbing since these works also indicate that our objective, conscious reality has simultaneously by and large retained the very same institutional and psychological structures, biases, and capabilities which had initially produced the Holocaust. In this case, at least, knowledge does not produce power, but rather its exact opposite, a profound sense of powerlessness and anxiety, precisely those emotions which were so crucial to the perpetration of the act in the first place.

This brings us to the intellectual debate on the nationalization and institutionalization of the Holocaust and its commemoration, and to the implications of historical relativism for the historiography, representation, and denial of the Nazi genocide. It should be noted that despite the assertions recently made by such scholars as Arno Mayer and Charles Maier, in the United States the Holocaust (and its memory) is the domain of a relatively limited, though not uninfluential minority and the intellectual/scholarly elite of which it constitutes an important part. The American public, however, is generally ignorant about the Holocaust, and is willing to accept its representation only because it is employed as an example of both the need for tolerance in a society highly exposed to violence and as a manifestation of the superiority of American democracy and values, at a time when American society is undergoing a profound crisis of confidence. In Israel and Germany, on the other hand, the Holocaust is a fundamental component of postwar, post-Auschwitz identity, not least because history as such plays a prominent role in these two nations' self-perception and politics, quite unlike the case of the United States, where history is popularly evoked as an adjective for whatever has become irrelevant. To be sure, the differences between German and Israeli "coming to terms" with or "reworking" the past are at least as revealing as the similarities. Moreover, intellectual influences from both the United States and France have introduced new elements into the debate which have been taken up by several interested parties, not always to the benefit of clarity or understanding. Here I refer first to the bizarre relationship between American relativists, best represented by Hayden White and his followers, and German relativization, represented at its most sophisticated level by Martin Broszat, and more recently by younger scholars such as Rainer Zitelmann, Goetz Aly, Susanne Heim, and, somewhat differently, Detlev Peukert. And second, to the links between the (partly French-influenced) denial of historical truth and "objectivity," as represented by some poststructuralist and cultural historians, on the one hand, and the outright denial of the actual event of the Holocaust, on the other. This debate is especially pertinent in view of the fact that it was at least partly anticipated by some writers who had themselves experienced Auschwitz. By juxtaposing the arguments of relativity with the accounts and ruminations of such survivors as Primo Levi and Jean Amery, we may gain more insight, however painful, into their growing awareness of the ephemerality of personal memory and the pressures to deny its veracity, which had so greatly informed their thoughts, anxieties, and ultimate despair.

If the Nazi attempted genocide of the Jews cannot be understood outside the historical context of the enactment and representation of industrial killing since 1914, then by the same token the post-1945 reality and representation of war, violence, and genocide must be seen within the context of a civilization which had produced Auschwitz

and for which the genocidal enterprise of the Nazis has become both a measuring-rod and an apology, a terrible warning and a necessary absence.

In the third and last part of the book I therefore try to look at the way in which postwar representations of war and genocide, especially in historiography, fiction, film, and museums, have tried to confront, or have avoided confronting, the question of evil and the inherent structures of modern society which had produced industrial killing. I begin by examining the strong predilection toward what I term a representation of absence in postwar Germany. This is to be seen as distinct from the more commonly recognized absence of representation, which in this case simply denotes eschewing representations of the victims of the Germans, that is especially the Jews. What I have in mind here is rather the manner in which the conscious absence of Jewish victims comes to play a major role in assuming the status of victims by German protagonists, both in literary, cinematic, and scholarly representations of the Nazi period. This can be seen, for instance, in Alexander Kluge's 1979 film *The Patriot*, which I discuss at some length, as well as in many other cinematic representations of the German past made in the 1970s and 1980s, such as Hans-Juergen Syberberg's *Hitler, a Film from Germany*, Edgar Reitz's *Heimat*, Rainer-Werner Fassbinder's *The Marriage of Maria Braun* and *Lili Marleen*, Helma Sanders-Brahms' *Germany, Pale Mother*, and others. Similarly, the German protagonists of such works of fiction as Heinrich Boell's *The Train Came on Time*, Guenter Grass' *The Tin Drum*, and Siegfried Lenz's *The German Lesson*, have precisely those strange and extraordinary characteristics which were at the time attributed to Jews. In other words, while these protagonists stand out as the true victims of Nazi society, they simultaneously remain an inherent part of it, whereas the Jews, who had lost this status under Nazism, still fail to regain it even in its subsequent German representations. Examples for this phenomenon of absence of representation and representation of absence can be found also in precisely those German works of scholarship which deal with the Third Reich, or even, indeed, with the Holocaust itself. We may note, for instance, that Hans Mommsen's "functionalist" interpretation of the Holocaust is characterized by a distinct absence of representation, in that the Jews in it are merely the objects of the process with which he is concerned, and are therefore of absolutely no interest to him as victims per se, that is, as objects of either detached investigation or empathy. Conversely, Martin Broszat's work on everyday life in the Third Reich is, along with the studies of his numerous disciples, an exercise in representation of absence par excellence, since it is based on the perceived need of the historian to empathize with his or her protagonists while acknowledging that those most deserving of empathy, namely the obvious victims of the regime, cannot be accorded it. Hence while German historians must create for themselves objects of empathy in order to do justice to the perceived requirements of their profession, both their national identity and their personal sensibilities preclude the Jews from serving this purpose.

Moreover, since the most obvious, not to say "natural" alternative is those historians' own compatriots, we find that empathy is paradoxically given in disproportionate amounts to the victimizer and bystander, precisely because they must displace those who on another level are known to be its strongest claimants. The examples mentioned above have to do with attempts by those associated with the perpetrators not merely to repress

the memory of past genocide but also to reformulate the notion of victimhood in a manner which would integrate perpetrators and victims into one category of victimhood, as the objects of malign but faceless forces of fate and history. The difficulties faced by the producers of German representations of the past are indeed enormous, since empathy is constantly being displaced and the knowledge of past crimes is constantly threatening to undermine any attempt at aestheticizing it by means of conventional artistic, literary, or scholarly tools. Conversely, attempts to represent war and genocide in this century by the victims, the bystanders, or those who perceive themselves to have served a just cause (which the Germans by and large do not), face a series of problems related to the nature of postwar modern society in general and, more specifically, the challenges with which each nation, tradition, or artist is faced when attempting to script a representational narrative of victimhood and slaughter and perforce to endow it with some larger meaning.

In the time I have left, I would like briefly to summarize the closing sections of my book, in which I discuss some of the problems involved in plastic representations of the Holocaust, and their implications for the manner in which we understand both the past and the contemporary nature of our own modern societies. I will discuss Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., and the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Beit Hashoah Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles.

As a national institution, Yad Vashem was set up to serve several and often contradictory purposes. It is predicated on the assumption that only the Jewish state can appropriate the memory of the Holocaust and employ it as part of its own self-definition and legitimation. Israel is presented as both the consequence and the panacea: had it existed before the Holocaust, genocide would have been prevented; and since genocide did occur, there must be a state. Yet since the Holocaust "belongs" to the state, the victims are potential Israelis, and the Israelis potential victims. Hence the historical link is projected into the future, and Israelis are perceived as survivors of a catastrophe still living on the brink of an abyss. If Zionism claimed to metamorphose the Jews of the Diaspora into a new breed, Yad Vashem makes them into the direct offspring of the murdered, avengers of their blood and preservers of their memory. The significance of Yad Vashem is derived first and foremost from its location. Yet the Holocaust occurred elsewhere: the camps are scattered throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Ancient rulers used to put up columns on the sites of their victories. But the Holocaust was humanity's greatest defeat. Can this devastating debacle at the end of what we like to think of as millennia of progress be commemorated where it happened? Or should it be remembered where the tortuous journey to Auschwitz began? Alternatively, can the Holocaust be made part of the New World, integrated into the fabric of American aspirations and optimism, not in order to qualify them, but to be qualified itself, as a terrible, but by no means fatal road accident on the highway to a better future? If the overt function of Yad Vashem is to prove the need for a Jewish state, not merely to document its tragic legacy, the ambiguity of the event's "lessons" is nevertheless evident in the uncertainty of its rhetoric. Although it gives great prominence to the Warsaw Ghetto rebellion, and tries to assert that the "natural" culmination of the Holocaust was the establishment of Israel, the very nature of the event, once exhibited, defeats this purpose, and one does not come

away from the museum with a sense of triumph, nor with a feeling that this reordering of the past has liberated its future, our present, of ambiguity and doubt.

Such contradictions are also characteristic of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, located as it is in the capital of a nation most of whose population was neither directly nor indirectly touched by the event. This site has the potential of universalizing the Holocaust as a phenomenon of major significance for human civilization as a whole. Yet universalizing the Holocaust may either mean that it "belongs" to all of humanity, or merely imply a shared responsibility; it may assert that genocide is a perpetual potential of human civilization, or that the Holocaust was merely one of innumerable mass murders in history. The museum may be intended to commemorate and remember the historical event of the Holocaust, or to employ it as a symbol of persecution and mass murder. Moreover, if the museum presents the Jews as the victims, is America the savior? And what about all other ethnic and cultural minorities in American society? Indeed, if modern civilization is the context, where does the United States fit in?

Like all cultural institutions, the Holocaust Memorial Museum is not only about memory and its commemoration: it is about the relationship between the politics of the present and interpretations of the past. But for many visitors, the museum represents what the past was actually like. Having been "there," we think we know, because we saw and felt it. And on the basis of that "knowledge" we also reevaluate, or reconfirm, our perceptions of our own society, of ourselves. Are we comfortable with the stark differences between here and there, then and now, and do we want to maintain them, at least in our minds, or can we perceive the potential similarities? Beyond the walls of the museum we know the zones of plenty and power, danger and poverty, racism and violence. But we also know that this is not as bad as that. Does the museum, then, have a galvanizing or a debilitating effect? Does it subvert or legitimize? Does it not accuse those who can no longer be punished and acquit those who are still among us, even ourselves?

The self-legitimizing effect of the museum is also part of its exhibit, which devotes little space to the role of science and the legal profession in sanctioning and promoting the murder of undesirable human beings. The Holocaust in this museum is a German affair, its victims are mostly Jews, and the perpetrators are mainly identifiable Nazis. In this sense, we are provided with a strangely comforting narrative, since Germany has been evidently transformed, the Nazis are presumably no longer with us, and Antisemitism is supposedly restricted now to a few marginal fanatics. The Holocaust, then, keeps happening only within the confines of the museum, and we, the visitors, are safe from its implications by the very fact that we can only see it exhibited as an historical event.

And yet, as I have argued before, the genocide of the Jews was not only a perfection and extension of the industrial killing of World War I, but also an enterprise that could have been accomplished only by a highly modern, disciplined, bureaucratic society, in which people had respect for law and order, science and technology, that is, a society very much like the Western industrialized states in which we now live. Indeed, if there is

any lesson to be drawn from the Holocaust, it is that unlike numerous previous and subsequent genocides, the crucial precondition for this kind of industrial murder is the modern, industrialized, bureaucratic state. Yet it is unlikely that such a state would allow the erection of a major cultural institution whose narrative would threaten to subvert its very identity.

For its part, the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Beit Hashoah Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles accepts the relevance of the Holocaust for contemporary conditions, and yet frames its meaning for the present within an opaque narrative of tolerance. Since prejudice was at the root of genocide, all that is needed is a change of heart; not a transformation of the conditions which perpetuate frustration and violence, but a different perception.

It is precisely this which the Museum of Tolerance tries to achieve. Assuming that its visitors are incapable of comprehending complex verbal or written messages, it provides them with a heavy dose of emotionally laden images, slogans and crude simplifications. The visitor is urged to "feel" the events plastically displayed, while being simultaneously warned of evil manipulators of public opinion and emotion such as Hitler and Stalin. If genocide was made possible by evil leaders, fanaticized followers, and indifferent masses, our own responsibility is to feel the injustice and inhumanity of those regimes and oppose them with our own purer emotions.

The effect of this message of tolerance is similar to television, producing an emotional reaction yet encouraging passivity. For what is the political agenda of tolerance? Should everyone be tolerated, or are some people and regimes wholly intolerable? Does empathy for victims imply action against perpetrators? Or does this version of tolerance legitimize our acceptance of glaring inequality and injustice, so long as we learn to love each other? To a striking degree, this high-tech museum displaces memory and history by means of an electronically-generated, ahistorically-oriented emotional catharsis, based on the assumption that such simulated experiences can be directly translated into so-called "genocide prevention." This type of education via simulation relies heavily on the senses and emotions and neglects the intellect. Curiously, this was also a central trope of fascism, that created vast "emotions factories" whose goal was to manipulate the masses and annihilate criticism, attributing cold intellectualism and an inability to empathize to the real or imaginary enemies of the state. Indeed, while the "factories of death" were the epitome of bureaucratized genocide, their own essential precondition was largely the "emotions factories" that generated the popular support for the regime that controlled them, and the distorted perceptions of reality that made complicity in mass murder so widespread.

Thus the Museum of Tolerance can be said to close a vicious circle of the representation of violence in our century, notwithstanding its good intentions. Here simulated genocide converts the event into a mere image which can be "experienced" and discarded at will. By trying to make the audience "feel" the event, the museum extracts it from its historical context, negating its past reality altogether. By making the artifacts more comprehensible and the exhibit "more real" than the event itself, the whole

spectacle is made ultimately "better," and certainly more "useful" as a guide for the future, than the reality on which it claims to be based.

This emphasis on an unreflective emotionality rather than understanding, this privileging of pathos over knowledge, this reliance on representing stark oppositions, assumes a mentality in the public which the museum in fact helps to create and perpetuate. Moreover, it obscures not only the bureaucratic character of the Holocaust, but also the fact that while the makers of genocide and their supporters were themselves driven by images they perceived as reality, it was science and technology, celebrated in the museum, which were an inherent part of envisioning and implementing Auschwitz. Hence the emotions-factories of Nazi propaganda were essential for the technological factories of death; trying to grasp this complexity by means of a hyperrealistic exhibit within a hypertechnological environment seems not merely to make for a misunderstanding of the past but also for a perpetuation of its potential future perils.

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