Holocaust Minimization, Anti-Israel Themes, and Antisemitism: Bias at the *Journal of Genocide Research*

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The *Journal of Genocide Research (JGR)* is the official publication of the International Network of Genocide Scholars (INOGS). In recent years there are many articles in which there have been minimizations of the significance of the Holocaust, statements delegitimizing the State of Israel, and by implication possibly an aura of antisemitism. To better examine such observations, seventy-six (N=76), genocide scholars and graduate students were asked to read selected statements from recently published *JGR* articles and judge them as to negative, positive or neutral bias. The statements were rated on a Likert-type scale as to conveying any minimization of the significance of the Holocaust, anti-Israel motifs, or anti-Semitic meanings. Approximately one third of the respondents judged the Journal to be promoting anti-Semitic themes, while more than half – 59% - felt that references to the Holocaust had been minimized, and another 59% noted an anti-Israel bias. The results are discussed in terms of bias in scientific and academic publications.

History of INOGS

The official publication of the International Network of Genocide Scholars (INOGS) is the *Journal of Genocide Research (JGR)*. Created in 1999 by genocide scholars who sought to widen the new field from its emphases on the Holocaust to apply to all cases of genocide, the Journal was well respected and well received.

Of late, however, the Holocaust and all that it encompasses to civilization appears to be increasingly trivialized, minimized, relativized, and massively misinterpreted in the *Journal of Genocide Research*. In this context, INOGS choice of Jerusalem in which to host its 2016 international conference is striking given the recent history of presenting articles that minimize the Holocaust.

Although INOGS members continue to produce meaningful studies and conferences, this bias is relatively recent and younger scholars may not be familiar with its origins. INOGS was created surreptitiously to compete with the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS).¹ From its foundational meeting held at Berlin in 2005, which I personally attended, there were remarks of leaders the new organization that conveyed Holocaust minimization and anti-Israel sentiments. Thus at this Berlin meeting, one of INOGS prominent leaders adamantly declared: “We have heard enough of the Holocaust!”

One interpretation of this statement is that he meant that we need to focus more fully on other genocides--a position to which I subscribe strongly for many years. The Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide in Jerusalem which I direct since its founding by me together with Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel and the late psychiatrist Shamai Davidson, a specialist treating Holocaust survivors, more than likely was the first to couple the two terms “Holocaust and Genocide” notwithstanding many a critical and dismissive eye by fellow Israelis especially in
the ‘Holocaust establishment.’ But to my ears, in the remark of the INOGS leader there was a tone of disconnection from the Holocaust that presaged future attacks on the basic significance of the Holocaust – not simply to challenge claims that it was as a so-called ‘unique event,’² but to a core level of denying the Holocaust as a major, cataclysmic, heartbreaking archetypal event.

The founding of INOGS included adopting the *Journal of Genocide Research* previously founded and edited by Henry Huttenbach. Over time it appeared that the previously unbiased scholarly journal increasingly diluted the meaning and significance of the Holocaust. At times there was almost a mocking tone when the Holocaust was mentioned, undermining its significance as an archetypal event in which there figured a configuration of processes that was unusual for genocidal events e.g., the sequence of tortures on the path to the first-in-world gas chambers and the fact that it was the Holocaust that catapulted the world to recognize genocide as a universal problem. It is widely agreed that it was the Holocaust that opened the eyes of a blinded civilization to the endless problem of genocides.

In *JGR* there are explicit denials in the Journal of the Holocaust as a milestone event, including several articles that deny that the Holocaust inspired or was instrumental in the passage of the *U.N. Convention on Genocide.*³ The Journal has also put forward the proposition that the Holocaust played no meaningful role whatsoever in facilitating the development of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Holocaust was also the driving force in the establishment of genocide studies. The first four major books on genocide in the English language were written by Jews, each of whom I know personally were very deeply responsive to the Holocaust, beginning with the seminal work by Raphael Lemkin who of course originated the very word-concept of genocide, followed by books by Irving Louis Horowitz,⁴ Leo Kuper,⁵ and Israel Charny.⁶ ⁷ The Holocaust was also the single most shaping influence for the founders of the first organization of genocide scholars, the *International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS)*. (Three of the four founders, myself, Helen Fein, Robert Melson are Jewish – our fourth co-founder was Roger Smith). Several *JGR* articles reinterpret the Holocaust removing it as a major historical cataclysm, and proceed to sanitize Nazi Germany's plan to globally destroy the Jewish people. Several *JGR* articles place the Holocaust in a so-called larger perspective of the Nazi effort to dominate Europe and its version of colonization, as well as in contexts of local/regional patterns of oppression and the killing of many minorities. Hence, the argument goes, the Jewish victims were not being singled out as Jews, and there was no dedicated effort to eliminate the Jewish people on Earth. It's as if to say, "So, forgive me, the killing wasn't really killing, it was an expansion of Germany; the victims weren’t really victims, they were casualties of colonization; the horror was a historic-political-nationalistic enterprise like so many others."

**JGR Articles**

A clear example of the above point of view will be found in the work of Hebrew University of Jerusalem scholar Raz Segal. Segal reinterprets the deportation of 440,000 Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz as the war was ending as an example of how German “anxieties about disloyalty and foreignness played crucial roles in the exclusionary campaign against the treatment of other minorities.”⁸
Segal concludes -

“Highlighting connections between anti-Jewish policies and the persecution of other groups… as it unfolded, rather than backward from the ‘final solution’ and Auschwitz opens new paths to rethink ‘the Holocaust’ in Hungary.” Note too the sudden employment of single quotes around the terms ‘final solution’ (also rendered in lower case) and ‘the Holocaust.’ Do you understand? The Holocaust is something that should be referred to in single quotes. It is not that real. It is an emotional word. Segal criticizes “frames [of] the persecution and annihilation of Jews in WWII as unique, placing these events and processes apart from essential historical and political context.” So perhaps it's just another of those kinds of events. Or to put it even more concretely, the Jews who were put on trains from Hungary to Auschwitz should know that it’s not the Nazi policy of killing all Jews they can lay their hands on, it is just the continuing persecutory policies of Hungary. That should help them relax much more on their journey to Auschwitz.

I found that JGR published seven articles that appear to express in varying combinations minimization of the Holocaust, delegitimization of the State of Israel, and repeat common themes of contemporary antisemitism. After the study was designed, the JGR published another or eighth article reporting that the planned destruction of European Jews at Wannsee "did not call for a systematic and immediate murder of all Jews," and that it did not specifically target the Jews among the many victims of the Nazis.

"The Wannsee conference is still largely understood as the echo of an earlier decision to annihilate European Jewry. This article questions this assumption.” The interpretation of the Wannsee Conference as aiming at the Jewish population “mistakenly concludes that because the conference targeted only Jews, it also emerged from within the narrower confines of the regime’s anti-Jewish policies. Heydrich’s actions at Wannsee can be better understood as a response to early failures in Germanizing annexed Poland and the settlement fantasies coming out of the SS apparatus after the invasion of the Soviet Union.”

The author of the article, Gerhard Wolf, lectures at Sussex University - a hotbed of anti-Israel and Holocaust downgrading scholars that for me is reminiscent of the cluster of deniers of the Armenian Genocide that formed around Bernard Lewis at Princeton University. Wolf, goes on to formulate the further conclusion,

“The Wannsee Conference does not stand out in its aim. Whether deporting Poles from the annexed territories or subjecting Jews to murderous working conditions on constructions sites in the East, both contributed to the overall aim of creating German Lebensraum.”

It was part of a larger program that disposed those who stood in the way of expanding German living space.
With tongue in cheek, one may pose the question of how to inform the Wannsee House staff who have labored for decades to maintain the museum and educational center that was not part of the Final Solution. As such, Wannsee becomes just another bureaucratic detail in the Nazi management of all of Europe’s populations.

In an issue of the Journal of Genocide Research in 2010, an article was presented in which the author claimed that from the outset that Zionism was based on a genocidal ideal, and that Israel’s War of Independence in 1948 was in fulfillment of that intention. Martin Shaw wrote, "Pre-war Zionism included the development of an incipiently genocidal mentality towards Arab society…” Shaw continues -

"No serious scholar contends that Israel had a single policy of destroying the whole of Arab society (still less of murdering all Palestinian Arabs)... they took advantage of the war to extend the boundaries of the Israeli state beyond those allocated by the U.N., and to expel large parts of the Arab population... Their aim was clearly not to expel all Arabs from Palestine or indeed from Israeli territory... Israel's destruction of the larger part of Arab Palestinian society in 1948 was not exceptionally murderous - 'only' a few thousand Arabs were massacred..."

Yet within a paragraph the author refers openly no less than to "the genocide of 1948," and concludes, “The consequence of a society founded on genocide... is a situation of more or less permanent war. So long as Israel does not come to terms with the genocide of 1948...[it] cannot hope either for integrity or for security.”

There is no reference to context or reasons regarding the conditions which brought on the war viz., the Arabs’ rejection of the U.N. partition and the consolidated attack of several Arab countries (see detailing shortly) on the Jewish community and its newly founded State of Israel. Quite objectively, the Jews experienced these attacks as a threat of total extermination in keeping with the rhetoric and cultural tradition of much Islamic thought, and very much like the all too real Holocaust that had just ended.

The above article by the UK's Martin Shaw was presented in an exchange with an Israeli American scholar Omer Bartov, so that it had some mitigating appearance of an open discussion of ‘competing viewpoints.’ Since then the publication has been a featured article in promotion of the journal.

In 2012 the journal featured a number of articles that repeatedly asserted or implied that the Holocaust was ‘just another event’ in the history of genocides, and specifically that it played no role whatsoever in the epical process of the creation of the United Nations Convention on Genocide, nor was it of any influence in the formulation and passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Marco Duranti “questions the centrality of the Holocaust.” He argues that the Holocaust did not play a significant role also in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and draws proof for his argument from his determination that
“progenitors of the Universal Declaration did not speak at the United Nations of the Holocaust as a unique evil.”

Duranti concludes -
“This study… argues against conceptualizing the drafting of the Universal Declaration as an exceptional moment of Holocaust remembrance in the immediate aftermath of the war.”

In the same issue, Thomas J. Kehoe notes that the Nazi propaganda for the Arabs “cast doubts [that] the calls to violence were an effort to expand the killing of Jews beyond Europe.” He defends his statement further by noting that anti-Jewish rhetoric was only “third in the hierarchy of target themes.” In fact, although it is less widely known, the Nazis did institute Holocaust policies in a number of Middle East countries. According to the archives of Israel's national museum, Yad Vashem,

“The occupation of France and the establishment of the antisemitic Vichy brought 415,000 North African Jews – most of the Jews on the subcontinent – into the orbit of persecution. Marshall Petain’s Nazi regime worsened the status of Jews of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, after Vichy-style antisemitic legislation was imposed on those countries.”

In Libya, thousands were actually banished to concentration camps. In Tunisia, the SS implemented anti-Jewish policy. Tunis's Jews “were forced to establish a local Judenrat, which was ordered to select 5,000-6,000 Jews, some of whom were sent to labor camps.” There is considerable historical evidence that the Nazis were ‘licking their chops’ at the prospect of wiping out the Yishuv – the Jews in Palestine - when their General Rommel surely would conquer Palestine, but thankfully Rommel was defeated at El Alamein by the British general, Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery.

A third article in the same issue authored by Amos Goldberg criticizes Yad Vashem for not relating to other victim peoples.

“Yad Vashem museum’s exhibition narrative and its aesthetic are insufficiently sensitive… to this political warning principle, which is now more than ever relevant to the Israeli context.”

Goldberg is also correct in that Yad Vashem fails to confront criticisms of its ignoring other peoples, but in his remarks there is a suggestion of a possible innuendo of joining in contemporary ‘New Left’ attacks on Israel.

In this same issue, Dirk A. Moses discusses the Holocaust gallery controversy at Winnipeg’s Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Moses renders his absolute ‘judicial judgment’ that “justifications for the Holocaust centrality – namely that its horror led to the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Genocide Convention in 1948” has been no less than “abandoned.” Moses bitterly acknowledges that the museum cannot remove the existence of a Holocaust gallery “for political and financial reasons,” but
that “the ways in which the Holocaust is... distinct make it a poor archetype for understanding other genocides.”

In March 2014 *JGR* featured two articles on the Holocaust. One of these two articles is the aforementioned Raz Segal's declaring the deportation of the Jews to Auschwitz as no more than part and parcel of how

> “the Hungarian authorities planned and carried out discriminatory and violent measures against ...non-Jews as well as Jews... Jews, Roma and Carpatho-Ruthenians .. [This knowledge] lays bare the meaning of ‘antisemitism’, highlighting connections between anti-Jewish policies and the persecution of other groups...”

There then follows Segal’s proposal that we “rethink ‘the Holocaust’ in Hungary” that was cited earlier.18

The second article is also by the aforementioned Amos Goldberg, an Israeli Jew who here is writing with an Israeli Palestinian, Bashir Bashir, both professors at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. They examine the relationship between the Holocaust and the Nakba.19 This article manages to recognize that the Holocaust is a major symbol of human catastrophe, and also that the extent of human destruction in the Holocaust is far greater than the human destruction that took place in the Nakba. At the same time the authors correctly point out that both events have become central experiences of destruction, degradation and suffering for each of their respective peoples. However, the definitive thesis then offered is that while Palestinians had nothing at all to do with creating the Holocaust, it is the Israeli Jews who very much authored the Nakba.20

> “The Palestinians bear no responsibility for the Holocaust... the State of Israel, however, generated and was fully involved in the events of the Nakba.”

So the fact that it is the Jews who killed and expelled Arabs in the Nakba is then assumed to make up for the previously mentioned disparity that there was a great deal more killing in the Holocaust than in the Nakba.

> “The Holocaust and the Nakba... structurally share, albeit partially the same type of dangerous political rationale.”

Most important of all, like in the article by Martin Shaw that we looked at earlier, there is not a single word in this long expertly intellectualized analysis of the plain facts that the Nakba developed in response to the threatened destruction of the Jewish community in the newly founded State of Israel after Israel had accepted the U.N. partition into Jewish and Arab states. If you read this article you again will not be reminded in any way that the small Jewish community in Israel known as the *Yishuv* was in fact fighting for its very existence against the local Arab population who were joined by several Arab countries - the war was fought along the entire long border of the country against Lebanon and Syria in the north; Iraq and Transjordan (Jordan) in the east; Egypt, assisted by contingents from the Sudan - in the south; as well as other volunteers from Arab countries who joined the local Palestinians. A threat of total annihilation was looming once again!
Do you get the logic? If we in no way recognize the antecedent murderous attack by a large number of Arabs from several countries, and then refer to several tragic and despicable moral failures of actual murderous genocidal massacres of Arabs by the Israelis, and to several events where Israeli commanders did all they could to expel parts of the Palestinian population, then what we have is a stark picture of evil destruction by Israel as if with no cause.²¹

Continuing such scholarship and giving it a public forum in a recognized academic journal should go a long way toward delegitimizing the State of Israel. The founding of Israel is no longer to be recognized as an expression of a heroic national movement called Zionism, or that the wish for a Jewish nation was in response to ongoing pogroms, mass killings and antisemitic events building up to the Holocaust. The attack on the basic legitimacy and moral justification of Israel sets a stage as well for far less tears in the future should any of the current dangers to Israel’s existence ever materialize.

Method

A ten-item questionnaire was designed that covered seven of the eight articles described above (the last article on the Wannsee Conference that was discussed earlier appeared too late to be included in the study, but clearly it speaks for itself as a serious minimization of the Holocaust). In addition respondents were faced with a concluding question asking for a judgment of the journal as a whole.

The first two items on the questionnaire were devoted to a few aspects of information about the respondents without including their names or any other specific identity data, and it was made clear to respondents that all information about them would be held confidential and that their completed questionnaires were going to an independent electronic survey service.

The first question asked:

What is your experience in genocide studies? A veteran scholar, a younger scholar, or a student. If you are a student, please write in your professor's name.

The second question asked:

What is your age, gender, and religious/ethnic affiliation? Example of replies: 27 M Baptist; 22 F Catholic

In this last question, the respondent was given the following choices – and instructed to check off more than one choice if desired.

--This journal publishes legitimate critiques of the meaning of the Holocaust and its significance
--This is a journal that minimizes the significance of the Holocaust.
--This is a journal with an anti-Israel bias.
--This is a journal with an antisemitic bias.
--None of the above.

On the preceding questions about each of the seven articles, the respondent was given a similar choice – again more than one response was encouraged if desired – specific to that individual article:
Altogether 150 invitations to participate in the study were distributed to known scholars of Holocaust and genocide studies. The questionnaires were completed at first by 46 of these scholars (31%).

In our invitation, scholars were also asked if they thought it appropriate to distribute the questionnaire to any group of their students in a Holocaust and genocide course. Only one scholar took up this invitation. Students were assigned to two separate groups for electronic compilation of their results, “beginning students” of whom there were 3 and “advanced students” of whom there were 6. An examination of the results of the 9 student questionnaires suggested that they fit in with the results obtained from the scholars who participated in the study.

We had originally announced that the study would be closed on January 31, 2016. By January 21 we had received 46 responses to the questionnaire from the known scholars we had invited, and then on the 21st we sent out a Final Reminder to our existing list to urge those who had not replied to do so before the deadline. ‘A funny thing then happened on the way to completing the study’ when the manager of the Listserv of the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) mistook his copy of the questionnaire as a posting for mass distribution and offered the questionnaire to all IAGS list members netting an additional 30 responses. Altogether we now had 76 responses. We will present results both for the group of 46 and for the total of 76.

Results

All questionnaires were submitted by respondents directly to an independent electronic survey service, and all results that are reported here are taken directly from the summaries of data generated by the survey company.

We had not previously included on our invitation list scholars whom we knew were active leaders and participants in the INOGS journal, including the very writers whose works were the subjects of the questionnaire. When the questionnaire was posted openly on the listserv, we anticipated that it might mobilize the concern of such supporters and that we would receive a flood of responses that would justify the articles and the journal as a whole and refrain from any or most criticisms of JGR as minimizing the Holocaust, and/or taking an anti-Israel stand, or antisemitic. This is precisely what happened as can be seen clearly when comparing the new responses to the responses of the initial group. There are now 16 out of the additional 30 respondents who raced through the questionnaire omitting any criticism whatsoever of any of the articles and concluding either that the journal overall publishes responsible critiques of the Holocaust or selecting “none of the above” to the last questions so as to take no stand at all. (Several respondents took less time to complete the questionnaire
compared to most other respondents, further strengthening the impression they had a set agenda.)

Nonetheless, remarkably when we combine the results for all respondents, still more than half of the professionals or students in Holocaust and genocide studies are found to believe the Journal is minimizing the Holocaust; more than half perceive the Journal as anti-Israel; and one third identify the Journal as showing an antisemitic bias.

The difference between the two groups also provides a stark glimpse at a profound split today in genocide studies that exists today between scholars who respect the significance of the Holocaust and eschew anti-Israel and antisemitic thinking, and those identified with the agenda of Holocaust minimization, opposition to Israel, and to a lesser but sadly significant extent antisemitic thinking.

The critical question in this study was No.10 in which respondents were asked to rate the Journal’s policy as they perceived it from the seven articles that were presented first for their ratings.

The results of the ratings are presented in two ways: for the initial group of N=46 respondents and then for a combined N=76 respondents.

For the first invited group of 46, the Journal was evaluated by an overwhelming 71% of the readers as minimizing the significance of the Holocaust, 69% tagged the Journal with an anti-Israel bias, and what then seems like a much smaller number of respondents but which in itself is a finding about which professionals should be concerned, 36% of the respondents identified JGR as showing an antisemitic bias. Only 5 respondents or 11% saw the Journal as providing a legitimate critique of the Holocaust, and 7 more or 16% had no criticism of the Journal, but did not affirm the legitimacy of the Journal’s critiques.

The results of all 76 respondents, which in our judgment included a rush of responses that sought to justify the Journal, are that 59% believe that the Journal minimizes the Holocaust, 59% identify an anti-Israel bias and 33% discern an antisemitic motif. There are 22% who believe the Journal's critiques of the Holocaust are legitimate while 18% do not attribute any political position to the Journal.

The responses to each of the seven individual articles are of course also of interest. There are variations in the severity of responses to each, but not a single one of these articles escaped being identified by a significant percentage of respondents as advancing at least one of the three options of prejudicial opinions. Table 1 summarizes the statistical results to all questions, including once again the responses to the last question in which the Journal as a whole was rated. These results are presented for all 76 respondents. Of the seven articles, all seven were judged minimizing the Holocaust (36%-67%), three were judged anti-Israel by more than 30% (44%-76%), and five were deemed antisemitic by more than 30% (32%-41%). The following are the excerpts/summaries used in the questionnaire and graphs of the results for each of the seven articles.
Figure 1: Responses of 46 Invited Respondents about the Journal as a Whole

Question 10.

SUMMARY QUESTION ABOUT THE JOURNAL IN WHICH ALL THESE ARTICLES ARE PUBLISHED

All seven articles above were published in different issues of the same journal. Taken all together, do you see the journal as sponsoring a message? Please rate the journal and its editorial policy. Please check off one OR MORE of the following choices:

Answered: 45  Skipped: 1

- This journal publishes...
  - 5 (11.11%)

- This is a journal that...
  - 32 (71.11%)

- This is a journal with...
  - 31 (68.89%)

- None of the above
  - 16 (35.56%)

- None of the above
  - 7 (15.56%)
Figure 2: Responses of all 76 Respondents about the Journal as Total Question 10.

**SUMMARY QUESTION ABOUT THE JOURNAL IN WHICH ALL THESE ARTICLES ARE PUBLISHED**

All seven articles above were published in different issues of the same journal. Taken all together, do you see the journal as sponsoring a message? Please rate the journal and its editorial policy. Please check off one OR MORE of the following choices:

Answered: 73  Skipped: 3

- This journal publishes... 16 (21.62%)
- This is a journal that... 43 (58.11%)
- This is a journal with... 44 (59.46%)
- This is a journal with... 25 (33.78%)
- None of the above 13 (17.57%)
Figure 3.

About the Israel War of Independence in 1948 (This has also been a featured article in promotions of the journal from which all articles have been taken.) The author of this selection does not say a single word about Israel being attacked by the Arab residents of Palestine and also being invaded by several neighboring Arab countries! Israel’s War of Independence is given absolutely no historical context, and Israel’s deep concerns for its security and survival are totally ignored. "Pre-war Zionism included the development of an incipiently genocidal mentality towards Arab society...” The author now acknowledges, “No serious scholar contends that Israel had a single policy of destroying the whole of Arab society (still less of murdering all Palestinian Arabs)... they took advantage of the war to extend the boundaries of the Israeli state beyond those allocated by the U.N., and to expel large parts of the Arab population... Their aim was clearly... not to expel all Arabs from Palestine or indeed from Israeli territory... Israel’s destruction of the larger part of Arab Palestinian society in 1948 was not exceptionally murderous - 'only' a few thousand Arabs were massacred...” Yet within a paragraph the author refers openly no less than to "the genocide of 1948" (bold and italics by researcher)... The consequence of a society founded on genocide... is a situation of more or less permanent war. So long as Israel does not come to terms with the genocide of 1948...[it] cannot hope either for integrity or for security.” Please check off one OR MORE of the following choices:

Answered: 72  Skipped: 4

- This is a legitimate... 2 (2.74%)
- This is a statement that... 26 (35.62%)
- This is an anti-Israel... 56 (76.71%)
- This is an anti-Semitic... 24 (32.88%)
- None of the above 14 (19.18%)

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Figure 4.
Question 4.

About Nazi Propaganda for the Arabs in World War II “This study casts doubt... the [Nazi] calls to violence [by the Arabs were] an effort to expand the killing of Jews beyond Europe...Anti-Jewish rhetoric figured third [the implication is as a low priority] in the hierarchy of target themes.” Please check off one OR MORE of the following choices:

Answered: 69   Skipped: 7
Figure 5.
Question 5.

About the Holocaust and the Birth of International Human Rights Law. This study... argues against conceptualizing the drafting of the Universal Declaration as an exceptional moment of Holocaust remembrance in the immediate aftermath of the war. The present study has determined that progenitors of the Universal Declaration did not speak at the United Nations of the Holocaust as a unique evil...[and] questions the centrality of the Holocaust...” Please check off one OR MORE of the following choices:

Answered: 71   Skipped: 5

- This is legitimate... 7 (9.72%)
- This is an anti-Holocaust... 43 (59.72%)
- This is an anti-Israel... 10 (13.89%)
- This is an anti-Semitic... 21 (29.17%)
- None of the above... 19 (26.39%)
Figure 6.

Question 6.

About the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum: "By melancholic means the museum suppresses any 'otherness that would make the story of the Shoah more complex... Yad Vashem museum's exhibition narrative and its aesthetic are insufficiently sensitive... to this political warning principle, which is now more than ever relevant to the Israeli context." Please check off one OR MORE of the following choices:

Answered: 68  Skipped: 8

- This is legitimate... 6 (8.70%)
- This is an anti-Holocaust... 31 (44.93%)
- This is an anti-Israel... 30 (43.48%)
- This is an anti-Semitic... 18 (26.09%)
- None of the above... 24 (34.78%)

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
Figure 7.

Question 7.

About the Holocaust in a Museum for Human Rights “The existence of a Holocaust gallery cannot be expunged for political and financial reasons, even though its justification is hardly convincing. Having abandoned...justifications for the Holocaust’s centrality - namely that its horror led to the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Genocide Convention in 1948...the ways in which the Holocaust is ... distinct make it a poor archetype for understanding other genocides.” Please check off one OR MORE of the following choices:

Answered: 70  Skipped: 6

- This is legitimate... 10 (14.08%)
- This is an anti-Holocaust... 47 (66.29%)
- This is an anti-Israel... 8 (11.27%)
- This is an anti-Semitic... 25 (35.21%)
- None of the above 12 (16.90%)
Question 8.

The Holocaust of the Hungarian Jews. The emphasis on the destruction of Hungarian Jews by the Nazis as an integral event in the Holocaust misses a seemingly larger point that “the Hungarian authorities planned and carried out discriminatory and violent measures against ...non-Jews as well as Jews... Jews, Roma and Carpatho-Ruthenians...” [This knowledge] lays bare the meaning of ‘anti-semitism’, highlighting connections between anti-Jewish policies and the persecution of other groups... Viewing this violence as it unfolded rather than backward from the ‘final solution’ and Auschwitz opens new paths to rethink ‘the Holocaust’ in Hungary.” [Researcher’s Note: the words ‘antisemitism,’ ‘final solution’ (in lower case) and ‘Holocaust’ are written with single quotes around them]. Please check off one OR MORE of the following choices:

- This is legitimate: 11 (15.28%)
- This is an anti-Holocaust: 44 (61.11%)
- This is an anti-Israel: 5 (6.94%)
- This is an anti-Semitic: 30 (41.67%)
- None of the above: 15 (20.83%)

Answered: 70  Skipped: 6
Figure 9.
Question 9.

The Holocaust and the Nakba. This article recognizes that the Holocaust is a major symbol of human catastrophe, also that “although the Nakba is a catastrophic event... the Holocaust was clearly incomparably crueler and bloodier.” The authors correctly point out that both are “defining events” of destruction, degradation and suffering “in the political consciousness and collective identity” of both peoples. However, the article continues, while “the Palestinians bear no responsibility for the Holocaust... the State of Israel generated and was fully involved in the events of the Nakba.” The authors now argue that the fact that it is the Jews who killed and expelled Arabs in the Nakba makes up for the previously mentioned disparity that there was a great deal more actual killing in the Holocaust. “The Holocaust and the Nakba... structurally share, albeit partially, the same type of dangerous political rationale.” In the long expertly intellectualized analysis there is not a single word of the facts that the Nakba developed in response to the threatened total destruction of the Jewish community and the newly founded State of Israel, and that the small Yishuv or Jewish population was fighting for its very existence against the local Arab population along with several invading Arab armies. Please check off one OR MORE of the following choices:

[Graph showing survey results]
Table 1. Results of Judgments of Seven Separate JGR Articles and Journal as a Whole (N=76)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question No. and Topics</th>
<th>Legitimate Critique</th>
<th>Minimizes Holocaust</th>
<th>Anti-Israel</th>
<th>Anti-Semitic</th>
<th>None of the Above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. 1948 War of Independence</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Nazi Propaganda for Arabs</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. International Human Rights Law</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Yad Vashem Narrative</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Uniqueness</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Transport for Hungarian Jews</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Holocaust and Nakba</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Journal as a whole</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The percentages are based on how many of the 76 subjects chose the option. Since respondents were encouraged to choose more than one response, the total percentage for each now is greater than 100 percent.
Discussion

There are any number of ‘biases’ built into this study beginning with the selection of the subjects. Obviously the study's invitations were influenced by my ongoing professional associations and favored particularly long standing relationships with IAGS members (although I would add, without having any data, that many IAGS members like myself are also members of INOGS and thereby subscribers to the Journal). Many of the invitations were sent out individually often with personal comments added to the standard draft, and clearly the intention was to capitalize on existing relationships to mobilize a larger number of responses.

My natural connections with colleagues also are tilted towards the older generation, like myself, with many of whom I have had contact over many years. Moreover, one cannot overlook also the edge that I might give, without intending to do so, to scholars who are Jewish like myself – let alone for the first generations of genocide scholars it is also a fact that there was a notable participation of Jews in the beginnings of genocide studies. The actual facts in the present study are that in the first group of respondents (N=46), 46% identified themselves as Jewish. In the additional group (N=30), 27% identified themselves as Jewish. For all respondents together, 38% are Jewish (others defined themselves variously as Christians, other religions, atheists, humanists, agnostics, gave no reply, or refused to answer the question.

In any case, there is no indication the study was prejudiced toward Jewish opinions. Unlike random surveys where the rules of the research game are that the samples of subjects need not be biased on a number of dimensions, in this study the only necessary criterion was that the respondent be a known participant in the field of Holocaust and genocide studies. Parenthetically it should be noted that a great many of the invited scholars are very well known for their contributions to the professional literature over many years.) Even if we were purposely to conduct a survey only of Jewish scholars in the field, the fact that a significant number of the respondents would identify an article in JGR and/or the Journal as a whole as decidedly minimizing the Holocaust, or an attack on the State of Israel, or an antisemitic statement would raise serious academic questions about the bias of the Journal. Even a small though notable percentage of responses that would identify articles or the Journal as biased would constitute a noteworthy critique of the professional integrity of the Journal.

Another issue is the way in which the researcher clearly stated his opinion. It is generally acknowledged in the philosophy of science that many, some say even all, scientific studies are guided by hypotheses that in effect express or become the preferred bias of the experimenter, and these biases need to be taken into account when reviewing the results of a study. Given it is so, it is recommended that in each case the experimenter identify as clearly as possible the biases that are directing the study and make an effort to evaluate the extent to which they influence the actual results. However, the accumulation of scientific knowledge nonetheless does include studies that, consciously or unconsciously, are aiming to gain a preferred result. One must take proper caution in interpreting and announcing the results of such studies, but if they meet other criteria for scientific investigation these studies too are honorable participants in the scientific process.

A possible serious criticism of this study as biased would be the fact that the invitation to respondents stated openly that the author of the study considers any number of JGR articles convey “very serious minimizations of the Holocaust.” Such a statement as if negates the model of a scientific study that presents as much as possible a ‘blank screen’ and then draws
subjects to respond entirely from their own selves. But that does not mean that there cannot be other studies based on a model of telling the subjects that the experimenter believes so and so, and then that they are being asked to say whether they agree or disagree. Moreover, even if we had not conveyed our view, the very excerpts of articles that we presented to subjects of each of the articles in themselves would convey to subjects that the articles are reviewed by us as pitched towards reducing the significance of the Holocaust’s meaning, and/or against the State of Israel, and/or possibly expressing antisemitism. In any case, the results that we report in this study have proven statistically overwhelming, and there simply is no doubt of the conclusions.

In this study, three very senior professionals whose own well-known works convey meticulous attention to detail and completeness declined to participate on the grounds that they had not read the articles in question in full and therefore could not render an opinion about them. In fact, in this study the respondents were not asked to rate the articles themselves; they were asked to rate summaries with selected quotations from the article that were prepared by the experimenter, and it is the experimenter who remains fully responsible for the integrity of the excerpting. It is very doubtful a significant number of professionals could be induced to read so many articles in full in order to participate in a study, and so it is a sensible approach to provide summary statements. In fact, two of the above senior professionals ended up writing to us a series of comments that included judgments of two articles as “anti-Israel” statements and three articles as “anti-Holocaust” statements, and when we wrote them to suggest their remarks could constitute responses to the questionnaires they agreed. One decisive comment by one of the two was, “Of course the Holocaust was central to the U.N. Convention and, in my reading, impacted on the Universal Declaration.”

The Martin Shaw Paradox: The Holocaust was Central to the U.N. Convention

As noted, one of the prominent issues in the JGR articles on the Holocaust is whether the Holocaust played any notable role in the development of the United Nations Convention on Genocide – to this day the prevailing basis for international legal decisions on charges of genocide. Among the spokesman on this subject is no less than the Journal’s editor, Dirk Moses, who we saw is quoted as saying decisively and absolutely that the belief that the Holocaust’s honor led to the U.N. Convention and to the U.N Declaration of Human Rights has been “abandoned.”

Ironically, one of the writers whose work is also spotlighted in one of the questions in the survey, Martin Shaw, who had stated that the intent of Zionism was inherently genocidal and that Israel’s War of Independence was in fulfillment of this imago, has written authoritatively in another article that the Holocaust was indeed very central to the development of the United Nations Genocide Convention! When the idea was enshrined in the United Nations’ genocide convention in 1948, the mass murder of the Jews was better known [than the assaults on the populations of all occupied Europe], and was increasingly the focal-point of how people viewed Nazi genocide.

I will add that a reader who is devoted to JGR and/or to Martin Shaw’s prolific writings, including his many attacks on the State of Israel, need not fear that Shaw has left the
tribe. In the same article Shaw insists adamantly that genocide (Holocaust included) is not really against any given victim people—

Genocide is an extreme form of counter-insurgency marked above all by preemption and collective punishment and destruction of groups suspected of insurgency and collaboration with enemy forces. It is therefore governed by a political rather than racial logic.

In this connection, note too how historic Turkish denialism of the Armenian Genocide has put forth vociferously that the Armenians made war on the Turks and that the so-called genocide was a response to their war. The Turkish denialists too will celebrate Shaw’s absolute principle. Shaw even goes on to describe the extent of the role of antisemitism in the genesis of the Holocaust as “‘the Holocaust,’ [single quotes by Shaw] with all its hallucinatory antisemitism.” Who is having the hallucination, I ask about a statement that antisemitism in the Holocaust is a hallucination.

Implications for Genocide Studies

The issue of minimization of the Holocaust is, of course, an academic issue of the first order in respect of adherence to historical truth. As we have asked, was the Holocaust a major and archetypal event? Further, after so many centuries of genocidal murders, did the Holocaust bring about a new breakthrough of awareness of genocide for humankind? Did the cluster of new and innovative methods the Nazis and their collaborators employed in the Holocaust bring us to a new awareness that as humanity and human society are now constructed there are no limits to the cruelty and totality of genocidal destruction?

To dismiss the powerful meaning of the Holocaust is no doubt to insult the Jewish people, but it is also an insult to other victims in that it is also a kind of model for denials of other genocides as well. One meta-meaning of such minimization is that is calls for academic/scientific study of genocide to be coldly factual, unsympathetic and uncaring, and without a fervent protest that mass killing is not a human way of life for mankind. Minimizations of the Holocaust is also a moral issue for genocide studies in respect of the respect and sensitivity we show all victim groups over the devastating genocide in each people’s history.

Moreover, the Holocaust is a far-reaching professional issue for the emerging field of genocide studies. Minimizations of the significance of any people’s genocide weakens our basic validity, trustworthiness, and moral value. Clearly, each and every genocide deserves powerful condemnation for its evil and ugliness, but just as an oncological researcher should be devoted to eliminating cancer and not simply to his own agenda for gaining scientific knowledge, so genocide scholars need to convey a grave protest at every mass killing and deep empathy for the victim people.

Finally, minimization of the Holocaust sounds a note of indifference and worse about contemporary threats to destroy Israel.
Homo Homocida (Man the Murderer)

The Holocaust and all genocide teaches the terrible truth that our \textit{Homo Sapien} species is a killer species. There no longer is room for the sanctimonious dewey-eyed illusions of social science and religious thinking that Man is intrinsically good but will act badly when stressed – hence we must remove as much stress as possible from human life. Not even the concept that man kills in the name of self-defense accounts fully enough for the unbelievable extent of killing. Of course, the horrible conclusion that Man is a born killer does not cancel out the truth that Man is also born to love life and is staggeringly creative. Both are true, and each individual and group chooses its configuration of these options.

On the news opinion program, \textit{60 Minutes}, Lara Logan interviewed Father Patrick Desbois, who is described as “a Catholic priest who is determined to expose the forgotten massacres of the Holocaust by locating the killing fields in Eastern Europe where the death squads of the Nazis and their collaborators murdered millions of Jews.” Reporter Logan asks “Why does it matter all these years later?” He responds, ”It matters because it still happens . . . It’s not the past, unfortunately. It seems to be part of the future.”

The show’s producer, Alan Goldberg, explains that Father Desbois “sees genocide as a human disease that ‘sleeps and awakens from one generation to the next’... He looks around him and he knows that there is a direct line between what the Nazis did 70 years ago and what ISIS is doing today.” Father Desbois says: “It’s not the same ideology, but behind, it’s the same disease.”

Kokh and Polian argue that denials and minimizations of the Holocaust also open the doors to “a harvest” of anti-Israel actions to the point of efforts to destroy Israel, as well as to encouraging in our times Islamic efforts at domination of society, terrorism, and anti-Christianity.

It is intellectually wrong – a violation of academic standards of truth and morally offensive - to weaken and in the case of some \textit{JGR} articles virtually to dismiss the significance of the Holocaust. This does not mean we are backing any return to the fallacious position that the Holocaust is totally unique and outside of all other history. It should be emphatically clear that it also does not mean that the causes and contexts of the Holocaust (like all genocides) should not be scrutinized from multiple perspectives. Respect and dedication to the Holocaust’s significance need to be part and parcel of concern and dedication to the profound significance of all genocides. Albert Nissman has written -

“No human being can lay claim to being sensitive, human, conscious, and educated, who has not grappled intellectually and emotionally with the Holocaust in all its ramifications, philosophical, historical, sociological, anthropological, financial, religious, theological, moral, affective, and scientific.”
Antisemitic Genocide Scholars?

One of the terrible lessons of genocide studies is that all of us human beings need to be aware of our potential for prejudice, dehumanization, and worse. 28 The history of professionals and academia is replete with cases of the mighty and great who have joined in persecutions of others – thus, the great psychoanalyst, Carl Jung, who produced an official psychiatric journal under the Nazi regime. 29 Or, militant linguist Noam Chomsky, who stands out as a ‘serial denier’ of several genocides – the Holocaust, Cambodia, and Rwanda, and also the genocidal massacres at Srebrenica in Bosnia. 30 Neither genocide scholars nor even Jews themselves are exempt from being collaborators with catastrophe and dehumanization. 31

A further question is whether minimizations of the significance of the Holocaust can be characterized as antisemitic. In this study, we purposely separated the two questions of “anti-Holocaust” and “antisemitic” so as not to force on respondents the interpretation that all minimizations of the Holocaust are antisemitic, and many respondents indeed made a differentiation. However 25% to 41% of our respondents characterized various articles as antisemitic and 34% to 36% characterized the journal as antisemitic – hardly trivial results.

As noted earlier, in recent years an increasing number of scholars have also identified virulent condemnations of Israel and questioning of its right to exist as opposed to entirely legitimate critiques of Israeli policies as the newest form of antisemitism. For some years the European Union promoted explicitly a definition of antisemitism as including delegitimizing Israel. 32 The United States’ State Department spells out in some detail the ways in which anti-Israel positions could be identified as forms of antisemitism. 33

Lessons about Professional Publication

For a social science study, the findings in this study constitute unusually strong outcomes and carry significant implications for the future development of professional publications in Holocaust and genocide studies. One immediate question is what kind of controls if any are available to professional organizations with regard to a publication that goes ‘wrong’ in some significant way such as the findings here of strong prejudices. In long-standing well established fields there are mechanisms of oversight for publications, but in the young emerging field of genocide studies we are still at a stage of simply being grateful for the very publication of our few journals. In respect of the larger academic world in which we participate, obviously there is no regulatory body as such for professional journals, but library subscribers, abstracting services, and evaluative academic indices such as ratings of the impact of a journal may well choose to take note of such serious results. Similarly, the publisher of a journal that is demonstrated to promote prejudice may well consider reacting to such information. Finally, one would hope that readers and subscribers to the Journal will register strong protests (and call for viable democratic changes in the governance of INOGS).

One veteran genocide researcher who has seen the results has written:

“I agree with your concerns on the various articles. It is a very disturbing trend among some scholars.”
Another distinguished leader in genocide studies wrote after completing the questionnaire -

“Thank you for taking on the anti-Israel, antisemitic leftists who have taken over editorship of the Journal of Genocide Research and have always been the leaders of INOGS.”

Despite the study’s methodological limitations, the findings strongly suggest that JGR is pursuing a prejudiced agenda that is professionally unacceptable.

The organization was created in January 2005 in a foundational meeting in Berlin as the European Network of Genocide Scholars (ENOGS), as if with the rationale that IAGS was American-centric and genocide studies needed a more inclusive framework, especially vis-à-vis Europe. However already at this founding meeting the president of ENOGS, Professor Jürgen Zimmerer, made it clear that it was his intention to change the name—and thereby the concept of the organization—to INOGS, an international organization obviously aiming to compete with IAGS. There was a heated discussion among the attendees, including a very articulate statement by Professor Frank Chalk, a former president of IAGS. A vote was then taken and the result was an overwhelming rejection of the change the name from ENOGS. Yet already then Zimmerer conveyed that he would effect the change in the future. Zimmerer is President of INOGS to this day. Although in very recent years the organization finally created a framework for election of officers, Zimmerer ran for office without an opponent. He has remained the president of INOGS since its very inception, a whopping total of 10 years (I will dare say reminiscent of Idi Amin’s famous “President for Life,” and a style of leadership unheard of in any bona fide scholarly or professional organization).

One wonders how Raphael Lemkin would have responded to the above full-blown eradication of the significance of the Holocaust. As a Jew Lemkin lost most of his family and narrowly escaped the Holocaust. He was passionately concerned for all peoples even many years before the Holocaust when he submitted a proposal to the League of Nations in 1933, to make the extermination of human groups an international crime. (The German delegation of the already enthroned Hitler regime walked out of the League of Nations the same week that Lemkin submitted his proposal.)

It is generally ignored that there was an earlier book in the English language following Lemkin and before Horowitz, Kuper, and Charny, but it is probable that because it was published outside the United States it did not gain much attention: Drost, Pieter N. (1959). The Crime of State. Book 1: Humanicide and Book 2 Genocide. Leiden: AW Sythoff. (It will be of some interest that in 1982 the last three of us were together invited by Amnesty International, meeting in Amsterdam, to link the new concepts of genocide study with the human rights concerns of Amnesty.)
president, the *International Association of Genocide Scholars* (IAGS). The controversy was described in an international edition of the *Forward*. Beckerman, Gal (February 16, 2011). Top genocide scholars battle over how to characterize Israel’s actions. *Forward*. http://forward.com/articles/135484/top-genocide-scholars-battle-over-how-to-characterize/

I had posted on the IAGS listserv a strong critique of Shaw only to be met in a few days not only by Shaw’s anger that I was insulting him, but by removal of my post from the listserv by then president of IAGS, William Schabas (who a few years later was designated by the U.N. to head the investigation of the second Gaza War “Operation Protective Edge,” but was forced to resign when it became clear that Schabas had withheld disclosure of a paid relationship to the PLO some years earlier). Schabas accompanied his removal of my post with a formal censure of me for an ad hominem attack on a distinguished colleague and in the name of IAGS issued a formal apology to Shaw. Ironically, in a personal communication to me later, Schabas acknowledged that he agreed with my interpretation of Israel’s War of Independence, yet he still failed to remove the censure of me publicly.


15 Ibid.


18 Segal, Raz (2014). *Beyond Holocaust Studies*, *ibid*.


20 In October 2015, Israel’s Prime Minister Netanyahu put his foot in his mouth in claiming that the Palestinian Grand Mufti gave Hitler the impetus to embark on the Final Solution, but Netanyahu was not wrong that the Mufti very much encouraged the killing and planned with Hitler the future extermination of then Palestine’s Jewish community.


23 Shaw, Martin (18 August 2010). The Holocaust, genocide studies, and politics. *Open Democracy*. http://www.opendemocracy.net/martin-shaw/holocaust-genocide-studies-and-modern-politics. One might also add that Shaw concludes his article by discussing the concepts of Dirk Moses and advances to the same idea as Moses that one must “think differently about genocide; in particular to see genocide as governed by security imperatives in which paranoia and delusion is always present, and often vengeance, punishment and retaliation…rather than as a hate crime…” (Shaw does not provide a reference to the source of the quotation by Moses). Shaw concludes that this different way of thinking about the Holocaust poses “a large and explicit
challenge to Holocaust and genocide scholars. It will be interesting to see how they respond.” Indeed the present study is part of my response to this challenge including to what I consider hate-mongering genocide scholars.

24 It has become an established principle in the literature on denials of known genocides that one particularly interesting and particularly nasty technique of denialists is to blame the victims for the genocide that was committed to them. See Charny, Israel W. (2003). A classification of the Holocaust and other genocides. *Journal of Genocide Research, 5*(1), 11-34.


30 There is a huge literature about Chomsky’s allying himself with deniers of these genocides and hereby qualifying himself as a denier. See for example: Monbiot, George (2012). Correspondence with Noam Chomsky 2012. http://www.monbiot.com/2012/05/21/2181/ Retrieved February 4, 2016


33 US State Department – Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism (2010). Fact Sheet