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MANDATORY HOLOCAUST EDUCATION LEGISLATION IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS:
A HISTORICAL STUDY

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the historical development of the Holocaust as an event essentially unknown to a significant portion of people living in the U.S. to an event that presently is a mandatory subject in several states, permeates several aspects of popular culture, and is the subject of scholars from a cornucopia of academic disciplines. Beginning with the development of the term “genocide,” the second chapter begins to acknowledge the subtle but increasing awareness of the Holocaust through the first attempts by educators to begin teaching the subject, as well as how a series of events in popular culture engaged significant portions of the U.S. population, exposing them to the Holocaust. The third chapter focuses on the specific context of the rise of Holocaust consciousness in the state of Illinois, noting specific events like the neo-Nazi march through the village of Skokie, a suburb of Chicago home to one of the largest populations of Holocaust survivors outside of Israel. The development of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Commission followed by the creation of a legislative mandate in the state of Illinois requiring, “a unit of instruction,” on the Holocaust is the subject of chapter four, drawing on the accounts of the legislators, as well as their arguments for and against the bill. Much of their motivations were drawn specifically on the “lessons” that the Holocaust could teach, and routinely are accounted. In chapter five, the central focus is the implementation of the Illinois mandate and how it was received. By 2005, efforts were underway to include another unit of instruction listing several cases of genocide that teachers could choose to teach alongside the Holocaust. The final chapter concludes with efforts to the present to continue to amend the Holocaust mandate in the state of Illinois. Other states followed suit as well, either mandating or including learning standards for their school age students. Continued concerns regarding the implementation and a discussion of the educationally appropriateness for various age groups are

explored, in addition to the continued existence of Holocaust denial. Despite concerns, the subject of the Holocaust continues to provide educational opportunities to teach students a wide range of lessons.

To My Mother, she never wavered in her support.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This dissertation is an examination into the historical development of the state of Illinois' mandate regarding teaching the Holocaust. Both national concerns and local trends within the state prompted legislators to address several deficiencies observed in the students of the state's public schools, promoting a set of "lessons" that many argued could be most effectively taught via this subject matter. Chapter two traces the rise of the Holocaust as a theme barely visible in the early 1970's, to a phenomenon encountered by millions of Americans. This Holocaust consciousness was visible in the development of television and movies on the subject, but more importantly as a means to promote specific political agendas. Beginning with the creation of the President's Commission on the Holocaust during the Jimmy Carter Administration, the federal government began a decades-long plan to place the Holocaust at the very center of a national narrative, culminating in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum that currently sits on the National Mall. At the same time, individuals began to place value in the Holocaust as a particular topic that could teach students a varying degree of lessons. Chapter three focuses specifically on the state of Illinois and the events which led to the development of the educational mandate within the state. Driven by several factors, an attempted march by the National Socialist Party of America through the streets of Skokie provided the impetus to develop a Holocaust museum in the state, as well as pursue educational goals through the public education system. Chapter four traces the arguments made by legislators, and the justifications for both support and opposition to the bill. Although passed by a relatively large margin in the Illinois General Assembly, the arguments made nevertheless continue to resonate into the future as educational mandates are routinely introduced. Chapter five further examines how a mandate regarding the Holocaust provided an avenue for other groups to engage in political recognition of past injustice. The final

chapter examines current practice focusing on how local school districts and teachers have implemented the mandate, and the realities to which that implementation is achieved.

A number of themes arise throughout this dissertation. The first is the power with which aspects of popular culture – both within and outside of the public schools – often provide the primary avenue through which people learn. Although problematic, this influence cannot be dismissed. Another related theme is both a local and a national narrative of the centrality of the Holocaust to 20th century U.S. history. Scholars have referred to this process as an “Americanization” of the event, which removes it from historical specificity and places the U.S. centrally within that narrative. Whether through American exceptionalism or other cultural tendencies, scholars of the Holocaust have argued quite strongly that common narrative and understanding of the event in the U.S. profoundly (and even erroneously) places their role in World War II as a central component. The Holocaust has become more than just a piece of popular culture, and is woven into the very cultural memory of the twentieth century. The most visible examples of this process can be seen in popular films and television programs that feature plots pertaining to the Holocaust. Another is the proliferation of Holocaust museums across the country which serves both as local memorials, as well as central hubs for educational resources, training, and curriculum materials. Students matriculating through these spaces receive a prescribed curriculum that may pose a significant problem to scholars of the Holocaust. Specifically, as educators across the state of Illinois employ the Holocaust within their classrooms, they open up this historical event to any number of pedagogical aims. The result cannot only be an “Americanization” of the Holocaust, but also a means to achieve any number of different curricular and pedagogical goals. While concerns of “Americanizing” the Holocaust

may seem overly particular, in actuality, these processes can ultimately remove the Holocaust from its historical specificity.

With the increasing development of Holocaust education, several scholars have begun to study what purpose lessons are meant to instill. Unsurprisingly, this has led to a number of problematic practices. For example, Samuel Totten references the use of simulations or role-playing in what educators assume is a technique that allows students an avenue to draw connections to their own lives.¹ Over the last two decades, many states have passed legislation either mandating the study of the Holocaust in the public school system, or have created commissions tasked with the purpose of exploring the plausibility of including the Holocaust as part of the state education curriculum. Others have explicitly included it in their learning standards. In total, thirty-five states and the District of Columbia in some way address the Holocaust through either state commissions or explicit learning standards. States have employed the Holocaust as a vehicle to teach any range of subjects at the high school or even middle school level, and in some rare cases, the elementary level. Commonly addressed within history and social studies classes, it also was a topic of study in Literature, European history, and even some psychology classes. Although these pieces of legislation generally pass without much difficulty, they represent a distinct character that each particular state attempts to impart upon its students. As a result of the growing Holocaust consciousness within the United States, Illinois' public education system drew on the importance of recognition of the victims of the Holocaust that would manifest within the classroom. Holocaust survivors are called upon to speak in classrooms to provide a human face to what is otherwise generally a difficult event to historicize and contemplate for the majority of high school-aged students, to say nothing of middle school students. These individuals who testify in front of students provide the authenticity necessary to

¹ Samuel Totten, *Holocaust Education: Issues and Approaches* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2002).

make learning meaningful, but their experiences and testimony is a commodity that future generations will not be able to witness firsthand.

While the very nature of the public education system - at least in the state of Illinois - allows for individual districts to create and implement their own curriculums, state mandates must be interpreted and followed by the districts. Furthermore, it is impossible to overlook the role popular culture plays in the education of individuals. Often, teachers must not only combat, but make use of and bring into conversation pieces of cinema.² Many texts and curricula have been used in classrooms across the U.S. to teach the Holocaust.³ Ultimately, though, while the intent of states such as Illinois and others is noble, the efforts are politicized and “Americanized.” While the state of Illinois includes the study of the Holocaust as part of the state standards for social studies, it is often also employed within the context of the English or literature, social studies or history, civics, government, or world studies classrooms. Teachers of each subject attempt to use the Holocaust as a vehicle to further the curricular aims of the particular subject area. The reason is that there are a variety of “lessons” that are nearly universally agreed upon to be demonstrated through the Holocaust.

The Holocaust has received significant attention from scholars in a variety of fields and through a number of disciplinary lenses. The history of the development of mandatory Holocaust education programs has not received the same rigor in terms of scholarly attention. Indeed, in many ways this dissertation is the first historical account of this process featuring the legislative process and the perspectives of not only state legislators, but those of lobbyists as well. This dissertation traces the historical origins of Illinois’ Holocaust education law. By following the

² For example, a very common example is *Schindler’s List*, DVD, directed by Steven Spielberg (1993; Universal City, CA: Universal Studios Home Video, 2004).

³ Immensely popular, and in some ways problematic, is Anne Frank, *Anne Frank: the Diary of a Young Girl* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1952).

original legislation through to the present, it becomes evident that various parties and ideologies permeated the original bill as it was and continues to be amended and then later interpreted in Illinois classrooms. Still a relatively recent phenomenon, most scholarly attention has been in the form of analysis and criticism of classroom practice and pedagogy. Many works provide insights into how teachers have attempted to teach the Holocaust and the difficulties educators face in teaching the subject.⁴

Another critical component of the Illinois Holocaust mandate is the inclusion in 2005 of units of study for other acts of genocide. A specific politics of recognition at work specifically within the state of Illinois allows for compelling arguments regarding how the public schools can begin to recognize and in some ways provide redress through education. Furthermore, these narratives can be in opposition, as various groups jockey for particular kinds of recognition in particular spaces. For example, the efforts of the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. are specifically focused on disseminating a narrative of the Holocaust that is very much Jewish-centric, often at the exclusion of other groups that suffered under the Third Reich. The direct effort of Illinois to understand and incorporate other acts of genocide into educational law stands in stark contrast to this national narrative. Furthermore, the specific historical events chosen for the educational mandate demonstrate a particular ideology that the state of Illinois has explicitly chosen to articulate. For example, the Armenian genocide is not officially recognized by the U.S. State Department, yet is specifically listed in the Holocaust mandate. Each act of genocide listed within the text of the bill is unsurprisingly beyond the borders of the United States, focusing on

⁴ For various academic studies of how the Holocaust has been taught from a curricular point of view, see Simone Schweber, *Making Sense of the Holocaust: Lessons from Classroom Practice* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2004); Samuel Totten, *Holocaust Education: Issues and Approaches* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2002); Geoffrey Short and Carole Ann Reed, *Issues in Holocaust Education* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004), Lucy Russell, *Teaching the Holocaust in School History: Teachers or Preachers?* (New York: Continuum International Publishing, 2008); and Yair Auron, *The Pain of Knowledge*, Translated by Ruth Ruzga (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2005).

crimes committed in other nations. It is not without a sense of irony that this law, in an attempt to stymie racism and teach understanding, that Illinois does not look to its own history for examples of genocide, the most obvious example the Native Americans.

Methods

This historical study is an attempt to determine the context that allowed for Illinois' Holocaust education law to come to pass, as well as the forces that contributed to the subsequent amendments. To achieve this, a number of archival sources were consulted. Minutes from the Illinois General Assembly floor constitute one main sources of evidence which provide a context for the arguments of the state legislators in the creation of these bills. Furthermore, the transcribed debates of the Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee also provide insights into the arguments presented in both opposition and support. The state of Illinois archive in Springfield provides significant evidence for the purpose of establishing these arguments. Another critical source of evidence for this study is the arguments of key legislators both in the General Assembly as well as within the media as they attempted to disseminate their intentions to constituents. These arguments from individual legislators help to demonstrate the motivation to create these pieces of legislation. As many of these arguments were disseminated into the press, many newspaper accounts provide significant context to these proceedings. Furthermore, due to Illinois' unique status as the first state to pass a piece of legislation mandating teaching the Holocaust, a number of doctoral dissertations provide case studies of specific classrooms within the state. Many contexts are examined, but a comparison between instructional practices at both middle and high school demonstrates the broad array in which the Holocaust is employed. In many ways, the curriculum demonstrates the purpose of the education, and

differences across individual districts and states provide another layer of contextualization that will help build my argument. A number of teacher and curriculum guides, both historical and contemporary, help provide the evidence for this contextualization. Again, the body of literature that engages the study of mandatory Holocaust legislation focuses primarily on classroom instruction and essentially does not engage the topic from a historical lens.

The literature specifically regarding the historical study of Holocaust education in the broader U. S. is much less prolific. Thomas Fallace's, *The Emergence of Holocaust Education in American Schools*, provides only a national evaluation of the trends which ultimately led to mandatory Holocaust education programs from a historical perspective.⁵ The vast majority of the evidence for Fallace's text can be found at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. Although the source is significant, it does not allow for the historical specificity of the various locales that teach the Holocaust to be covered in a thorough manner. What it does accomplish, though, is provide not just a chronology, but an examination of the national trends that ultimately determined the course of the development of the Holocaust in the U.S. By drawing on many similar events found within this dissertation - the rise in Holocaust consciousness, the Holocaust in popular culture, educational techniques and goals - provide a critical resource in the historical understanding of the Holocaust from a national perspective.

In order to contextualize this study within the greater historiography of the rise in Holocaust consciousness in the United States, a number of texts concerning this phenomenon were also consulted. In particular, Edward Linenthal's, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum*, and Peter Novick's, *The Holocaust in American Life*,

⁵ Thomas Fallace, *The Emergence of Holocaust Education in American Schools* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

provide historical context to the rise public awareness of the Holocaust in the United States.⁶ As many of the authors within this historiography argue, the Holocaust was a relatively obscure topic following the end of World War II and into the 1950's. However, a number of cultural events, including the airing of the 1978 television miniseries "Holocaust", brought the event to the forefront of popular attention.

Significance

The significance of this study informs a number of various academic topics. First and foremost, there has yet to be an in-depth historical study on the development of mandatory Holocaust education laws in any state, let alone the state of Illinois. Scholars such as Thomas Fallace have studied the emergence of Holocaust education from a historical perspective, but this one study analyzes national educational trends, and lacks the historical specificity of a particular state context. This subject is ripe for historical study, and this particular case will provide cause for comparison of that various state legislatures that have mandated Holocaust education. This study provides the historical context for the rise of Holocaust education mandates, but also elucidates how these mandates have changed – particularly within the state of Illinois – to incorporate an increasing political recognition through the public schools. As more states mandate the teaching of the Holocaust, there will ultimately be a growing body of literature on the implications of these various laws. There has been very little opposition, aside from a few instances, to these pieces of legislation. In conjunction with texts on efficacy, curricular demands, philosophical implications, and stated goals of Holocaust education, this study will

⁶ See Edward Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995) and Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999).

allow for a better understanding of the motivations of one state to combat a specific set of societal problems, and employed the Holocaust in an attempt to correct it.

The passage of legislation mandating the teaching of the Holocaust has a number of complex considerations that drastically influence how students learn about the event. The development of Holocaust consciousness in the U.S. has fostered and culminated in many states directly mandating, or otherwise encouraging their respective public schools to teach it. The inclusion of study of other acts of genocide, found in the Illinois law, provides students the ability to make comparisons and generalizations which threaten to “Americanize” the Holocaust into a universal, global event with little to no tie to its historical specificity. Furthermore, as future students encounter the Holocaust in Illinois classrooms, the curricular goals will continue to shift in order to meet the demands of ever-changing expectations from the state board of education. This generation will come to know about the event through a much more mediated and culturally constructed view of these events. Influenced heavily by popular culture, many students will derive their knowledge of the Holocaust via these sources, because of and in spite of efforts from educators. Since there is little indication that mandatory education laws such as those concerning the Holocaust are going to be repealed, the influence they have upon the state’s public school population will continue to be a topic of study.

Chapter Two: The Holocaust in the U.S. - From Popular Culture to Curricular Necessity, 1975-1978

Currently, six U.S. states have enacted legislation mandating that their public schools teach students about the historical events of the Holocaust. Public school students in California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey, and New York, receive instruction on the topic at various grade levels. In addition to these states, many more specifically address the Holocaust as a topic of instruction in their individual state learning standards.⁷ Still other states have passed legislation creating Holocaust commissions or other exploratory committees to study the feasibility of teaching the Holocaust in that state. However, the manner in which that instruction reaches these students could not be more varied from state to state, or even between school districts. The development of these courses was a result of numerous factors. This chapter will trace the origins of the growth in Holocaust consciousness which was a significant factor in promoting the event in the populace. Beginning in the 1970's, states began to address the growing desire of students to engage and learn of Hitler's destruction of the Jews in Europe. Individual schools and districts began to explore teaching the Holocaust. The fall of 1977 saw the creation of district-wide courses in both New York City and Philadelphia. These courses, however, came with some backlash. On a limited basis beginning in 1976, the city of Philadelphia implemented a course to, "study the holocaust of the Jews in Nazi Germany." One of the developers of this early course was Holocaust scholar Franklin H. Littell. When the city looked to make the course a district-wide requirement in the fall of 1977, they were met with resistance from Reverend Hans S. Haug, Chairman of the German-American Committee of

⁷ Of the 50 U.S. states, all explicitly address the Holocaust as a topic of instruction in their state learning standards except for: Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida (mandated to teach by law), Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, New York (mandated to teach by law), Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Greater Philadelphia.⁸ The desire for these courses derived from a rise in public knowledge of an interest in the historical event of the Holocaust. Scholars have referred to this emergence of discussion, thought, and attention a burgeoning, “Holocaust Consciousness.”

To meet the demands of this growing interest, schools began to design and create courses pertaining to the study of the Holocaust. Curriculum planners in New York City faced considerable protest from two groups opposed to the cities planned Holocaust course. As in Philadelphia, German-American Committee of Greater New York President George Pape called for the course to be abandoned, claiming that it did little to discern German from Nazi, and did not address other acts of genocide committed during and after World War II, specifically by the Soviet Union. In addition to the German-American Committee, M.T. Mehdi, president of the American-Arab Relations Committee voiced concerns that the course would provide an avenue for “the Zionists to use the city educational system for their evil propaganda purposes.”⁹ Furthermore, there were concerns that the two week course of study emphasized only the massacre of Jews and failed to recognize other groups that suffered under the Nazi regime. Both New York City and Philadelphia school districts continued with their plans to expand their Holocaust courses in spite of protestations.¹⁰ These two plans represent a response to a growing demand for courses specifically relating to the Holocaust. Both Holocaust scholars and the general public have referred to the 1970’s as a watershed decade where a number of events

⁸ James F. Clarity, “Philadelphia Schools to Require a Course on Nazi Holocaust,” *New York Times*, 18 September 1977, 23. See also Ari L. Goldman, “Study of Holocaust Started in Schools: New York City May Make Course on Killing of Jews by Germany a Requirement Next Year,” *New York Times*, 7 October 1977, 26.

⁹ Ben Gallob, “N.Y. Sticks to Holocaust Curriculum,” *Jewish Advocate*, 13 October 1977, 1. See also “Teaching the Holocaust,” *New York Times*, 9 November 1977, 24.

¹⁰ It should be noted that these two districts were the first public school institutions to teach the Holocaust on a district wide scale. There are many reports of single teachers teaching courses on the Holocaust in public and private high and middle schools, as well as adult education centers. In some Jewish private schools, for example, there were courses regarding the Holocaust as early as the 1960’s. One report indicates that the first textbook for Jewish schools was available by July of 1968. See Ben Gallob, “Textbook on Holocaust Ready,” *Jewish Advocate*, 20 June 1968, A13.

coincided to bring the Holocaust to the forefront of local and national attention.¹¹ For many individuals in the U.S., they were only beginning to come to understand the events of the Holocaust as distinctly separate from the destructive carnage of World War II. Educators, and soon politicians, began to view the Holocaust as a vehicle to not just teach about a historical event, but to also address concerns regarding genocide, human rights, civic virtue, democracy, and many other moralistic ends. By the 1990's, several more potential "lessons" were employed as justification and purpose for teaching the Holocaust. Through these various goals, educators saw in the Holocaust a multi-faceted historical event that could be demonstrative of many concepts.

Many events, both domestically and internationally, served to bring Holocaust awareness to the U.S. However, this rise in consciousness created a number of questions for scholars, survivors, and members of the general public to begin to grapple. Questions regarding representation continue into the present. One of the first central questions was of definition, of finding a term to describe the destruction of the Jewish population in Europe. What was the term to be? To whom and when did it apply? Should the etymology of such a term contain Biblical references? Credit is often given to Holocaust survivor, author, and future President of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, Elie Wiesel for coining the term, "Holocaust." Whether or not he coined the term is inconsequential, but, his use of the term provided credibility and an identity

¹¹ Perhaps the best known and widely cited work chronicling the rise of "Holocaust consciousness" in the U.S. is Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (New York City: Mariner, 1999). Other works include Kirsten Fermaglich, *American Dreams and Nazi Nightmares: Early Holocaust Consciousness and Liberal America, 1957-1965* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2006); Leon A. Jick, "The Holocaust: its Use and Abuse within the American Public," *Yad Vashem Studies XIV* (1981): 303-318; Norman G. Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (New York City: Verso, 2000); Peter Novick, "Holocaust Memory in America," in *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, ed. James E. Young (New York City: Prestel-Verlag, 1994), Thomas D. Fallace, *The Emergence of Holocaust Education in American Schools* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008): 11-16; Lawrence Baron, "The Holocaust and American Public Memory, 1945-1960," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies 17* (2003): 62-88; Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* (New York City: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1-3, and a non-scholarly discussion by Frank Rich, "Journal; The Holocaust Boom," *New York Times*, 7 April 1994, among others.

for the term.¹² The term, “Holocaust,” was not without its fair share of criticism. In fact, many scholars, including Wiesel, often prefer the term, “Shoah,” or other descriptive phrases over, “Holocaust.” In both terms, there is an understanding of a decidedly Jewish specificity to the scope, as opposed to the more general term, “genocide.” The specific etymologies of these terms are critical for educators and legislators to understand if they are to implement policies and curricula surrounding the study of this historical event.

Although the most popular term to describe the destruction of European Jews, “Holocaust” is a term riddled with problematic Biblical baggage. “Holocaust” is a compound word, comprised from the Latin, “holos,” meaning “whole or total,” and the Greek, “kaustos,” meaning, “something wholly burnt up.”¹³ Zev Garber and Bruce Zuckerman note that before World War II, Holocaust was a word used to denote a large scale religious (most often animal) sacrifice, adding that the term is used to describe a number of events in Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁴ The problem, Barber and Zuckerman note, occurs when the Biblical context of “Holocaust” is mediated through the historical specificity of the event. The Jews of Europe were considered to be the sacrifice that was to be given to god. However, those performing the sacrifice were the Nazis themselves. The term then “casts the Nazis into a quasi-‘priestly’ role,” and that, “The act of sacrifice involves a tacit religious agreement between sacrifice and deity; if the sacrificer offers the sacrifice, the deity will benefit him. Indeed, often times it is the deity

¹² Wiesel has stated that he began using the term in the late 1950’s, and the term was first in print 17 October 1963 *New York Times Book Review*. Following his acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986: Bill McAllister, “Elie Wiesel Wins Nobel Peace Prize,” *The Washington Post*, 15 October 1986, A1; Jane Leavy, “The Restless Witness: Peace Laureate Elie Wiesel and his Will to Remember,” *The Washington Post*, 15 October 1986, D1, and Associated Press reports in the *Chicago Tribune*, *Baltimore Sun*, and other leading U.S. papers all listed coining the term, “Holocaust,” as one of his many accomplishments.

¹³ Zev Garber and Bruce Zuckerman, “Why do we call the Holocaust, ‘the Holocaust’?,” in *Remembering for the Future: Working Papers and Addenda Volume II*, ed. Yehuda Bauer et al. (New York City, NY: Pergamon Press, 1989), 1880.

¹⁴ One of the first recorded instances of the use of the word Holocaust beyond this Biblical context was following World War I, when French writers used the word as a means to demonstrate the destruction of life. In Garber and Zuckerman, “Why do we call the Holocaust, ‘the Holocaust’?,” 1881.

who demands sacrifice; it is then the demanding god who must be propitiated by the slaughter and burning of flesh.” This metaphor leaves little room for scholars to promote and actively use the term. By the late 1980’s, Wiesel, the man credited with coining the term, shied away from using it. Instead, the preferred term by scholars is the Hebrew word, “Shoah,” which means, “destruction, ruin.” Instead of a term laden with metaphorical dilemma, “Shoah” has essentially no connection to sacrifice or religious significance. It became a term used to denote Yom Hashoah, otherwise known as Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel.¹⁵

Both Holocaust and Shoah refer to the historical specificity of Hitler’s attempt to destroy the Jews of Europe. Although many attempts have ensued to include the persecution of other groups throughout the Third Reich under the umbrella of “the Holocaust,” for the most part scholars tend to follow that understanding. However, this event presented a paradigmatic shift in terms of international law. The crimes of Hitler and the Nazis committed against Jews, homosexuals, the Sinti and Roma, criminals, political criminals, people with disabilities, Slavs, Soviet prisoners of war, and others were in many ways completely beyond the scope of current law. Many questioned the justice of the Nuremberg trials, claiming the Allies did not have the jurisdiction to hold leading Nazis accountable for a crime without a name. “Crimes against humanity” was the general term given to the implementation of the eradication of whom the Third Reich deemed to be enemies. It was the work of Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin to first define the crime of genocide, but then to also work tirelessly to convince the newly formed United Nations that its members must enact international legislation to hold accountable people who would seek to commit such crimes against humanity again. The term Lemkin created was, “genocide,” and its exact definition would be argued and manipulated for several years following

¹⁵ Ibid., 1881-1882.

the end of World War II and the Nuremberg trials. This codification into law would give legitimacy to an international governing body to hold individuals accountable for their crimes.

While the terms “Holocaust” and “Shoah” both share a historic and religious specificity, the term genocide tends to stand for many crimes in many different specificities. To this day, the term continues to be a point of contention and debate – what exactly constitutes genocide? Lemkin arrived as an immigrant to the U.S. in 1941. His seminal text, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, first published in the U.S. in 1944, defined and outlined a legal framework for nations to identify and address cases of genocide.¹⁶ Citing an August 1941, broadcast by Winston Churchill which claimed, “We are in the presence of a crime without a name.”¹⁷ Genocide, like Holocaust, is a compound word. The Greek, “genos,” meaning race or people and the Latin, “cidere,” to kill, comprise the term. Although built and developed upon the crimes committed by the Nazis, Lemkin intended “genocide” to apply to a broad set of crimes that individuals, as well as nations, could be held accountable. Lemkin specifically notes the case of the Armenians in Turkey in 1915, as one instance of genocide. Founded in 1945 following the end of World War II, the United Nations was the applicable international body which Lemkin lobbied to enact legislation concerning genocide. Due to his efforts, he was chosen to author the proposal with a panel of other lawyers that would argue before the United Nations General Assembly. Finally adopted on December 9, 1948, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide became international law on January 12, 1951. The definition was expansive, and meant to provide a broad umbrella to describe the crime.

¹⁶ Rafael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 79-95.

¹⁷ Rafael Lemkin, “Genocide,” *The American Scholar* 15 (1946): 227.

The UN convention covered three distinct methods of genocide: physical, biological, and cultural. Genocide is committed against groups, and the groups specifically noted in the U.N. convention can be racial, national, linguistic, religious, or political. The first category, physical genocide, is the killing of members of a group, or putting members into situations where death or sickness is highly likely. The second category, biological genocide, focuses on attempts to prevent groups of individuals from reproducing or otherwise breaking up families or marriages. The final category, cultural genocide, includes the purposeful destruction of characteristics of a particular group. This is the most inclusive category as it encompasses aspects of both physical and biological genocide, but also defines attempts to destroy the cultural aspects of a group. Examples include removing community leaders, the destruction of artifacts, art, or knowledge, or attempts to eradicate a native language.¹⁸ Although these criteria fit a considerable breadth of crimes, there remains inadequacies in terms of what constitutes genocide, both during and after an incident occurs. Lemkin himself noted that defining “political groups” was problematic. Ideological differences within and between nations can be fluid and difficult to demonstrate intent, a critical component of the crime of genocide.

With strong support from the U.S. delegation to the U.N., media support in many of the Allied nations, and support from international organizations, the Genocide Convention was brought to a vote in the U.N. However, it was up to member nations to ratify the treaty in order to provide it the necessary credibility as international law. As one of the most powerful nations following World War II, support from the U.S. was critical to the creation of the convention. Noted supporters included House Representative Adolph Sabath from Illinois, Professor Philip Jessup (U.S. delegate in the U.N. Committee on Codification of International Law), and even

¹⁸ Miriam L. Milliren, “The U.N. Convention on Genocide,” *World Affairs* 110 (1947): 294-295.

President Harry Truman.¹⁹ Unfortunately, though, following the ratification of the convention in the U.N., the U.S. Senate did not ratify the treaty until 1987, and was not signed into law by President Ronald Reagan until November 4, 1988. The reasons for the lack of Senate ratification were many. First, there is a lack of intent in the law. There is a burden of proof in regards to the intent of the perpetrators. Often this intent is only able to be demonstrated following the committed crime. Furthermore, there is little impetus aside from an unenforceable moral obligation to nations that would seek to intervene to stop or even prevent genocide from occurring. Quite frankly, the only call to action is a commitment to morality and justice by nations seeking to enforce the genocide treaty. More importantly, the American Bar Association cautioned that the law could serve as a means to charge U.S. citizens. Others noted that the law could open the U.S. to potential charges regarding the Native American population, or even segregation and Jim Crow in the U.S. South. While much of this opposition was overcome by the Foreign Relations Committee of the U.S. Senate, the outbreak of the Korean War, followed by the rise of Joseph McCarthy, and the escalation of the Cold War resulted in attention turned to more pressing matters.²⁰ This missed opportunity would have implications in the decades following the U.N. ratification of the Genocide Convention, with the U.S. as a world leader but free of international obligations to police genocide, or even to recognize the crime. This ambiguity would have impact into the future, as teachers would be required to teach this concept. Without a firm grasp of what constitutes the crime of genocide, it then becomes far more complex to begin to teach lessons focusing on genocide prevention as many educators would express in the future. The common refrain of “never again,” becomes far murkier.

¹⁹ Rafael Lemkin, “Genocide as a Crime Under International Law,” *The American Journal of International Law* 41 (1947): 149.

²⁰ Samantha Power, *“A Problem From Hell”: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2002), 65-70.

Despite sporadic calls for ratification of the U.N. genocide treaty, the Holocaust and genocide were relatively beyond the realm of popular culture and memory in the U.S. until the mid-1970s.²¹ Although some scholars did make comparisons in various studies to aspects of the Holocaust, for the most part it was far from the forefront of public consciousness. It began, at first in Israel, with the capture of Adolf Eichmann by Mossad agents in Argentina in 1960. Eichmann, a high-ranking Nazi official, oversaw the deportations of Jews throughout Europe to ghettos and concentration camps in the Third Reich.²² Gaining international attention, this event helped to bring the Holocaust to the forefront of public consciousness particularly in Israel, but also rippling to the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and other western European countries. The U.S. relationship with Israel strengthened in 1967 with the Six Day War, and the Yom Kippur War in

²¹ Although dormant, there were brief exposures to the realities of the Holocaust to the American public. In 1953, a program aired an interview with a Holocaust survivor. *This is Your Life: Hanna Bloch Kohner*, National Broadcasting Company (New York City, New York: 27 May 1953). http://archive.org/details/this_is_your_life_hanna_bloch_kohner. In this program, host Ralph Edwards interviews people and gives a synopsis of their lives. Interviews generally brought individuals from the subject's past onto the program, as well. Many scholars consider this program to be the first interview with a Holocaust survivor to be televised, as well as the first discussion of the Nazi Final Solution on national airwaves. The term "Holocaust" was not used in the program. The phrase, "Hitler's cruel purge of German Jews," was the only phrase referring specifically to the Final Solution. Discussion of the concentration camps, as well as traveling in cramped cattle cars were shared between Hanna and a friend from the camps that also was able to survive. Both were sent to Aushwitz, and the conversation mentions the gas chambers, and the death of Hanna's parents. She was later sent to Mauthausen camp where she was forced to endure slave labor. America is routinely referred to as a beacon of hope by the host throughout the broadcast. Two years later, a play on Broadway did garner much critical praise, as well. *The Diary of Anne Frank*, by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, directed by Garson Kanin, Cort Theatre, New York, NY, 5 October 1955. Based on Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl*, trans. by B. M. Mooyart-Doubleday (New York City: Doubleday, 1952), the play ran from October of 1955 until June of 1957. Winning several awards, it received the Tony award for Best Play in 1956, as well as Garson Kanin for Best Director. Although there were 717 performances, this play ultimately reached a very small audience. It did not have a profound impact on the place of the Holocaust in public consciousness in the US, but there were brief references.

²² For debate on how the Eichmann trial played out in U.S. media and public opinion, see Novick, *Holocaust in American Life*, 128-134, and Norman G. Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Verso, 2003), 30-31. Novick provides a more nuanced discussion of the various media outlets reporting on the capture and trial than does Finkelstein. Within the context of the Cold War, Novick demonstrates how fears of anti-German sentiment were sure to follow after a reexamination of Nazi crimes, and would only serve to benefit the Soviet Union, as was reported in the *Wall Street Journal*. American media outlets, including Jewish owned presses, were part of the majority criticizing Israel for Eichmann's capture and trial. Finkelstein argues that the Eichmann trial was the first example of Israel using the Holocaust to evade criticism. He states, "Once ideologically recast, the Holocaust proved to be the perfect weapon for deflecting criticism from Israel" (30). Finkelstein continues that American Jews would adopt this practice of ideologically recasting the Holocaust, especially following the Six Day War in 1967.

1973. Comments made by Arab leaders prior to and during these wars, renewed fears of genocide with rhetoric calling for the destruction of Israel.²³ Furthermore, this mounting consciousness resulted in the growth of scholarly avenues for study of the event, as well as references in public discourse and popular culture.

Prior to the mid-1970s, knowledge of the Holocaust in the general public of the U.S. was vague due to a considerable lack of interest. For example, Raul Hilberg's *The Destruction of the European Jews*, one of the first and foremost scholarly studies of the Holocaust was not published until 1961, after overcoming considerable difficulties in finding a willing publisher. This changed slowly over the decade. By 1968, the Library of Congress included a major entry card, "Holocaust – Jewish, 1939-1945," and other texts appeared providing scholarly assessment of the Holocaust period.²⁴ The first Holocaust education programs also began in the mid-1970s. While these events all served to promote Holocaust consciousness in the public, it was the administration of President Jimmy Carter that crystallized that consciousness in the efforts of the federal government. In 1978, Carter announced the creation of the President's Commission on the Holocaust, and the appointment of fifteen members to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.²⁵ The task of this Commission was to recommend a memorial to victims of the Holocaust. Its ultimate goal would be eventually realized as the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum located on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. However, the process to create this memorial spanned over a decade and generated much debate regarding what the site would

²³ For discussion of the tie between Jewish consciousness, the Holocaust, and Israeli/U.S. relations, see Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*, 148-161, and Jick, "The Holocaust," 314-315.

²⁴ Jick, "The Holocaust," 312-315.

²⁵ Although many consider Carter's decision to create this Commission was mainly for memorial purposes, some scholars note that Carter also profited politically by the move. Having been criticized for not adequately supporting Israel in his administration's foreign policy, the creation of the Commission was one way in which to demonstrate support. See Novick, "Holocaust Memory in America," 159.

memorialize, where it would be located, and the overall goals of such a memorial.²⁶ Individual states also brought it upon themselves to build memorials to victims of the Holocaust, resulting in increased attention and discussion around the country.

Originally constructed in 1977, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, located in Los Angeles, California, was founded with the mission of generating change, education, solidarity with both Israel and the Jewish diaspora, and teaching the Holocaust.²⁷ The educational aspects of the Center are generally pursued through the Museum of Tolerance, which allows visitors an opportunity to analyze issues of racism, prejudice, and anti-Semitism, primarily through the lens of the Holocaust. The Museum of Tolerance opened its doors to visitors the same year that the National Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. opened on the National Mall, 1993. Indeed, locating the center at the Yeshiva University's Los Angeles campus served to underpin the educational aspects of the center and to foster scholarly study of the Holocaust. It was the universities that first began to engage the Holocaust in critical ways, often at the behest of their student populations. Beginning with Jewish schools, universities and private high schools began to offer courses of study on the history of the Holocaust.²⁸ What these educators were quick to find out was that their instruction was soon to be influenced, challenged, mediated, and aided by

²⁶ An excellent historical study of this process can be found in Edward Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2001).

²⁷ Russell Chandler, "1st Center for Holocaust Studies to be Established in Los Angeles," *Los Angeles Times*, 26 August 1977. Named for Austrian Holocaust survivor and "Nazi hunter" Simon Wiesenthal, the Center seeks to foster tolerance and understanding. Wiesenthal had opened documentation centers in Linz and Vienna, Austria in an effort to help locate and track Nazi perpetrators around the globe. The documentation center in California was only so named with permission of Wiesenthal, but he did not aid in the efforts in its creation. Chandler notes that, "Though there are several Holocaust 'rooms' elsewhere in the United States, the proposed Simon Wiesenthal Holocaust Center will be the first to incorporate documents and a studies program under one roof" (1). See also Michael Kernan, "Simon Wiesenthal's Legacy," *The Washington Post*, 30 April 1979, for a brief interview with Wiesenthal. Although he dislikes the moniker of "hunter," he does consider his life's work to be focused on memory, and keeping the crimes of the Third Reich in the forefront of public consciousness claiming, "What I do is make people not forget" (B3).

²⁸ For brief examples of the kinds of programs that a number of schools tried, see "BU Hillel Plans Holocaust Education Week," *Jewish Advocate*, 30 March 1978, 2; "H.S. Student Holocaust Program At Brandeis U.," *Jewish Advocate*, 27 March 1975, 6; "Holocaust Course Begins," *Jewish Advocate*, 27 September 1977, 7; and "Holocaust Education Conference in Worcester," *Jewish Advocate*, 20 April 1978, 15.

efforts of popular culture, particularly by film and television. While some educators may have been able to utilize these events, they were often fraught with historical inaccuracies.

Following the critically acclaimed success of Alex Haley's television mini-series "Roots," which aired on the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) from January 23 through 30, 1977.²⁹ The National Broadcasting Company (NBC) aired its own four part mini-series, "Holocaust," which aired from April 16 to April 19, 1978.³⁰ Based on Alex Haley's text of the same name, "Roots" was nominated for an astounding 37 Emmy awards, winning nine. While critically-acclaimed, it also was viewed by an immense audience in the U.S., becoming the highest rated program in television history at the time.³¹ Starring Louis Gossett Jr., Olivia Cole, Ben Vereen, and LeVar Burton as Kunta Kinte, the series proved popular due to its subject matter, as well as to the popularity and personality of author Alex Haley. An unusually cold winter was also cited as reason for the high ratings. Ultimately, one columnist attributed the program's success, holding viewers for eight consecutive nights, to the, "fascination with the great family saga itself," and particularly the acting performance of Lou Gossett Jr. as Fiddler.³² NBC looked to bolster its own ratings by releasing a mini-series of their own. Like "Roots," "Holocaust" provided the network with an emotionally-captivating television program that hopefully would draw a larger audience.

²⁹ *Roots*, American Broadcasting Company (New York City, New York: 23-30 January 1977).

³⁰ *Holocaust*, National Broadcasting Company (New York City, New York: 16-19 April 1978).

³¹ Bill Kaufman, "'Holocaust' ratings up 2nd night," *Newsday*, 19 April 1978, 54A. Roots averaged a 66% share with the final episode estimated watched by 100 million viewers.

³² Cecil Smith, "TV Commentary: 'Roots' Reaps Vast Harvest," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 February 1977, G1, 11. Cringe-worthy title aside, Smith's description of the program demonstrates a strong understanding of why it gained such traction in the general public. ABC heavily promoted the program prior to airing in hopes of increasing viewer ratings. See also, "'Roots' – Slave Life to Air on ABC-TV" *Los Angeles Sentinel*, 1 July 1976, B, for an example of early stories on the upcoming mini-series. Focusing on the cast and production crew, the article also highlights the efforts of Haley in search of his family, which Smith discusses as a critical component to the success of the program. Also, in many ways, it was a view of U.S. history that many had not contemplated, or viewed for the first differently through the lens of racial slavery.

Prior to airing, the miniseries generated much discussion and controversy. Within NBC, creative editing decisions angered director Marvin Chomsky,³³ and filming was often disrupted by government officials and private companies that had agreed to filming commitments and production tasks. Journalist Tom Shales interviewed Chomsky prior to the airing of “Holocaust” to discuss filming issues as well as creative changes that the network enacted. While filming in Austria and Germany, beer bottles were thrown at the filmmakers. Sets were decorated with swastikas and other graffiti, and a lab contracted to process the film ruined many of the first shoots. NBC reported that the national headquarters, as well as local affiliates, received hate mail from the American Nazi Party and other neo-Nazi groups. Also, under pressure from some local affiliates, NBC cut four seconds of “anti-erotic frontal nudity,” against the protestations of Chomsky. Not only did affiliates take issue with scenes of nudity, some took exception to airing “controversial programming” and didn’t want to risk losing viewers to other networks. In order to combat this unease, NBC “spent weeks lining up and circulating recommendations from civic and religious leaders....a steady stream of press releases with headings that tell the story: ‘National Education Association Recommends ‘Holocaust,’’ ‘Religious Leaders Praise ‘Holocaust,’’ ‘The Rev. William L. Weiler Commends ‘Holocaust,’’ ‘Three Leaders of National Reading Groups Commend ‘Holocaust,’’ and even ‘George Meany Praises ‘Holocaust.’”³⁴ In addition to these recommendations, The Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith (ADL)

³³ Marvin Chomsky was not new to the genre of the emotionally charged television mini-series. Chomsky’s previous series work included director for six hours of “Roots.”

³⁴ Tom Shales, “‘Holocaust’: A ‘Pivotal Moment for TV,’” *Washington Post*, 12 April 1978, B5. See also Arthur Unger, “‘Holocaust – history’s lessons: NBC anticipates 100-million-plus viewers for mini-series; actors and other participants talk of its effect on them,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 April 1978, 16, for individual accounts from the actors and film makers discussing other acts of anti-Semitism that they encountered while filming. Many of the accounts confirm the emotional turmoil that the actors encountered while filming, as well as how they felt after the films completion. Actress Rosemary Harris is quoted as saying, “I do not want my eight-year old daughter to see ‘Holocaust.’ Maybe if she were 12. But, right now it’s hard enough to get on with her multiplication tables. I think we are trying to make our children grow up too soon.” Actor Joseph Bottoms commented on his own lack of knowledge regarding the Holocaust, noting, “Even when I was in school, my WWII education was minimal. We were told there were concentration camps, but not death camps.”

distributed a 16 page supplement for newspapers across the U.S., with a circulation of approximately 9,000,000. The ultimate hope, the ADL claimed, was that this insert would serve to provide some context of Nazi atrocities, as well as be used as a classroom guide for study of the Holocaust, which they claimed was largely ignored or briefly mentioned in schools.³⁵ While coming on the heels of a wildly successful television miniseries, there was considerable speculation that Holocaust was going to be a success in terms of the number of viewers.

“Holocaust” shared a number of similarities to “Roots” when it aired in the spring of 1977.³⁶ It aired over consecutive nights, supplanting primetime programming over a four day period. The story followed the lives of two families, one Jewish, the other Nazi, as they each navigated World War II. Starring James Woods, Meryl Streep, and Michael Moriarty, “Holocaust” also gained much critical acclaim, amassing 15 Emmy award nominations, winning eight. One columnist reported that the program was successful because, “Any TV show capable of producing the kind of emotional involvement ‘Holocaust’ produced must be considered a success...” and, “went further than TV has ever gone in some areas. That it may not have gone as fast as the truth is attributable to the limitations of the medium.” Focusing on some of the shortcomings, the author notes that it was necessary to limit the horror of the program as, “it may have lost its chance to draw a sizable audience – and with this show that really was an important

³⁵ “Dailies Order 16-Page ADL Wrap On Nazis, Timed To ‘Holocaust,’” *Variety*, 12 April 1978, 84. The specific newspapers to receive the inserts were the *New York Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Philadelphia Bulletin*, *Washington Star*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Boston Herald*, *Dallas Times-Herald*, and the *Detroit Free Press*, among others. Funding for these inserts was raised through a combination of donations from newspapers themselves for the printing, and some local ADL chapters also raised funds to help defray the cost of printing. NBC and the production firm in charge of the program, Titus Productions, gave nothing to help publish the pamphlets beyond the allotted publicity images and materials. Brief educational aspects and questions regarding the broadcast can also be found in “‘Holocaust’ Study Aids and Spinoffs,” *New York Times*, 14 April 1978, C26. In addition to the study guides distributed by the ADL, the article also mentions supplemental materials including the novel by screenplay author Gerald Green that can also help in teaching populations about the Holocaust.

³⁶ In, “First ‘Roots’, Now ‘Holocaust,’” *Philadelphia Tribune*, 29 April 1978, 6, one columnist went as far as to directly compare the events of the Holocaust with the experiences of racial slavery claiming, “The point... is that the African *Holocaust* and the Jewish *Holocaust* [italics those of the author] were one in the same, engineered by immoral men who placed bigotry-hatred – and economic gain above all other human values.”

factor.”³⁷ And draw a sizable audience it did. Prior to the airing of the mini-series, NBC anticipated over 100 million viewers to tune in to all or part of the program. After airing, NBC claimed 120 million viewers, the most watched program in the company’s history, tuned in to “Holocaust,” just short of the total for “Roots” that ABC had achieved previous year.³⁸ As with “Roots,” many periodicals devoted a significant quantity of column space to discussion of “Holocaust” both before and after its airing. Many reactions were overwhelmingly positive, focusing on aspects of memory and the historical necessity to one, “never forget,” and two, “never allow it to happen again.”

Reactions to the miniseries filled special columns and letters to the editor sections of many newspapers and other publications. The comments reflect a wide breadth of emotions that people felt driven to write. Expressing disgust and sympathy at various components of the program, one seventeen year-old contributor also noted frustration and anger; “When I saw a neo-Nazi on the 6 o’clock news saying that many of the camps did not exist...I was outraged.... NBC is to be commended for showing this to the American public.” Another expressed similar frustration, not from the comments of hate groups, but rather the lack of intervention specifically of the churches inside and out of the Third Reich. Furthermore, this contributor noted that, “No, many of us Christians have not forgotten and have made a point that our children and their

³⁷ Bill Carter, “‘Holocaust’ more than a ratings winner,” *The Sun*, 21 April 1978, B6. Unsatisfied with the conclusion, this author also noted that much of the conclusion seems superficial in ending of some of the character story arcs. Another interesting anecdote was the number of complaints that the New York NBC affiliate received due to the obtrusive commercial interruptions because, “It is seldom that a TV show creates so much visceral tension that viewers simply cannot stomach the stupidity of the commercials that are paying the freight.” Television critic for the *Chicago Tribune* Gary Deeb further commented on the miniseries, focusing on the ratings and how important the number of viewers was to NBC. Despite commercial interruption, “Holocaust” was a massive success for the network following the flop that had occurred with a similar miniseries, *King*, a biographical miniseries focusing on Martin Luther King Jr., which failed to draw viewers to the network. See Gary Deeb, “Tempo TV & Radio: ‘Holocaust’ finally gives NBC execs a winner in the Nielsen numbers game,” *Chicago Tribune*, 19 April 1978, A6.

³⁸ See Carol Burton Terry, “‘Holocaust’ audience second only to ‘Roots,’” *Newsday*, 22 April 1978, 30A; Tom Shales, “‘Holocaust’s’ Pain and Power: This Drama’s Ratings Could Affect TV Programming for Years,” *The Washington Post*, 12 April 1978, B1, for discussions of the impact that “Holocaust” potentially could have over network programming.

children will know that this did happen. What we are responsible for is what is happening now in history. We must speak against the atrocities that are still happening throughout the world.” Still another noted that the lack of discussion about both the film and the historical event of the Holocaust allowed it to happen in the first place, and NBC should be commended for their commitment to telling the story of the Holocaust, “Not only did it happen, but it could happen again if we refuse to acknowledge the possibility and learn from history.” Another 17 year old, a Jewish American, commented that, “Too many people my age do not even know what the Holocaust was.” These remarks offer insights into not only the emotional reactions that many had to the program, but also the desired impact viewers thought it should have. Calls to not forget, and to not allow such events to happen again are at the forefront of the comments regarding “Holocaust.” Only one published contributor to *Newsday* bothered to mention the quality of the film, briefly noting, “‘Holocaust’ was well done.” Indeed, the program served as a catalyst to propel the historical event of the Holocaust further into the public consciousness.³⁹

Likewise, the *New York Times* devoted considerable column space to addressing and publishing letters to the editor regarding the miniseries itself, as well as to the four reaction pieces that were printed by authors for the newspaper.⁴⁰ Unsurprisingly, many of the submissions were penned by individuals from New York City, or from surrounding New England. Konrad Bieber of Port Jefferson, NY echoed criticism regarding the commercial interruptions claiming, “It is simply a disgrace that this earnest effort at reconstituting one of

³⁹ “Viewers React to NBC’s Holocaust,” *Newsday*, 24 April 1978, 49. Comments were printed along with the names and cities of the contributing authors.

⁴⁰ The letters to the editor addressed the “Holocaust” miniseries, two critiques by *New York Times* television critic John J. O’Connor, “Trivializing the Holocaust,” by Elie Wiesel, and “In Defense of ‘Holocaust,’” by screen writer Gerald Green. Spanning two pages, the *Times* tried to provide a representative sample of the letters received. It should be noted that aside from Green’s piece, the three others were quite negative citing a variety of reasons. O’Connor’s most often cited comment referred to the miniseries as “a sterile collection of wooden characters and ridiculous coincidences.”

history's greatest tragedies should be interrupted by singing and other commercials. The effect is to discredit the plausibility of the drama." Dore Schary of New York City offered praise of the program with, "Granted that the plethora of commercials was bothersome or often outrageously intercut, but we are living in a television world which offers us occasional meaningful programs for the price of being offended by ads for deodorants, soaps, beer, and the like." Others praised the network for airing such a program, noting that while not perfect, it still offered viewers a distilled and dramatized fiction of the Holocaust. One particularly poignant contributor, Ray Robinson of New York City, took issue with Wiesel's comment that "The Holocaust transcends history," arguing that, "no dramatist, no novelist, no magazine writer, and no author would be eligible to analyze the endless mystery of the Holocaust and no attempt would ever be made to understand its horrors. Saddest of all, only those like Mr. Wiesel, who survived the Holocaust, would be privileged to comment on it or interpret it. The result of such a desolate philosophy would be a vast information and educational vacuum."⁴¹ These comments reflect the broad range of reactions that viewers had to the program, calling to attention its fictionalized account, as well as the "necessity" to view this kind of program, for both historical as well as educational purposes.

Within the pages of the *Boston Globe*, a pseudo-point-counter-point column attempted to provide some perspective on "Holocaust" approximately a month after it aired. Contributions from Benno Weiser Varon, former Israeli ambassador, and Fred Friendly, advisor on communications for the Ford Foundation and former president of CBS News, provided some perspective on the miniseries, as well as what it may have accomplished. Of "Holocaust," Varon, "wasn't satisfied either, but was aware that this was completely besides [sic] the point.

⁴¹ "TV MAILBAG: The 'Holocaust' Controversy Continues LETTERS ON 'HOLOCAUST,'" *New York Times*, 30 April 1978, D29. 16 letters were published on this day alone.

‘Holocaust’ was not aimed at those who were involved. It was aimed at those who weren’t.” A scene early in the film depicting the wedding of a Jewish man and an Aryan woman was one particular anachronism Varon critiques. The worst offense, though, was the scene referencing the Wannsee Conference, and a Nazi officer incorrectly referencing the total number of Jewish individuals in the world in 1942. Despite these glaring discrepancies, after telling the story of his local baker, Baron applauded the miniseries because it “made at least some of what happened known to millions. Their story had never so much exposure as in those four evenings in April.” Fred Friendly, on the other hand, first began by demonstrating his distaste for “docu-drama,” including within that genre, the work of Edward R. Murrow regarding Senator Joseph McCarthy, which he directly oversaw. While, “frustrated and affronted, I congratulate NBC and writer Gerald Green for creating ‘Holocaust’ and beaming this four-day electronic memorial into millions of living rooms during prime time,” and after observing his wife’s reaction to the program, it “caused me to ponder ‘Holocaust’s’ impact in North Platte, Neb.; Nashville, Tenn.; and in Providence, R.I., where I grew up.” Citing a friend from Providence, Friendly described the reaction to “Holocaust” at a local firm. “It was the single most discussed subject at the bank directors meeting and all the officers and trustees, all of them Christian, wanted their children to watch it, ‘because most of them were too young to know Hitler from Napoleon.’” Perhaps most poignant, though, were his comments regarding the power of television, and its place within popular culture. Friendly wrote that, “at a time when it is more of a teacher than our schools, more of a pulpit than our churches and synagogues, more of an influence than most parents, 500 minutes of ‘Holocaust’ minus 67 minutes of hard sell in prime time was better than Starsky and Hutch and the hokey Winner Take All Tennis in Las Vegas. Like it or not, television is determining what kind of people we are.”⁴²

⁴² Benno Varon & Fred W. Friendly, “‘Holocaust’: Could television series make it real enough?,” *Boston Globe*, 14

Indeed, the emotional reaction was varied, but also vocal. The economic impact was also deeply felt. Writing for his syndicated nationwide column, Art Buchwald provided a satirical take from the perspective of an advertising executive writing in a diary concerning the sale of ad space during “Holocaust.” With the primary goal of humor, Buchwald also calls to attention the unnerving juxtaposition of death and genocide to advertisements urging viewers to buy their products. Many critiques of the program were based on the jarring nature of the commercial interruptions.⁴³ Commercials, however, were only part of a greater issue with the operation of a large national network. *New York Times* TV critic John O’Connor commented in several pieces over a two month period, engaging critics that thought his comments were overly harsh of “Holocaust.” Commenters asked, “Mr. O’Connor’s basic theme seems to be that commercial television, because it is commercial, should not attempt to present important themes. Is that only the province of public television? Should commercial television not strive to add to the understanding and knowledge of the public it serves and which supports it?” The answer, for O’Connor, is that, “Preoccupied with delivering as many viewers as possible to advertisers, the networks are, first and foremost, in the business of counting heads. There is good reason why their programming chiefs usually have a background in sales or law or research, in anything but programming. The inevitable result is that the system is being drawn down an ever-widening whirlpool into mediocrity.”⁴⁴ Artistic integrity, O’Connor argued, simply did not drive commercial television.

May 1978, A3. Engaging a number of topics, Friendly’s comments dealt directly with the proposed neo-Nazi march that was to take place in Skokie, IL. He expressed what could loosely be described as joy that many more people were to view “Holocaust” than their march.

⁴³ Art Buchwald, “Dear Diary: ‘Holocaust’ Turned Out To Be an Adman’s Dream,” *Washington Post*, 25 April 1978, B1.

⁴⁴ John J. O’Connor, “TV VIEW: ‘If It Sells, It Must Be Good,’” *New York Times*, 7 May 1978, D37. O’Connor finishes his scathing critique of commercial television with, “Until commercial television can find another way or ways of existing, the system cannot hope to be considered with the seriousness it think it deserves. Box office is not

Before the final segment of “Holocaust” had even aired, connections to the educational aspects of the miniseries were appearing in the press. *Newsday* published a story on how the program had impacted classrooms. Focusing specifically on school systems on Long Island, the author notes that the Holocaust as a subject is taught in approximately a dozen schools. Many of the students were quoted at length on their reactions, and their family member’s reactions to the program. The student comments reflect both an understanding and a naivety regarding the events of the Holocaust. In many ways, the miniseries served to both challenge and reinforce those understandings. However, it was not just students that generated discussion, but faculty as well. An art teacher remarked, “I watched ‘Holocaust.’ I watched ‘Dallas.’ To me it was the same thing – a family in trouble...It’s network TV trying to be an educator.” Teachers aired similar comments to those of *New York Times* critic O’Connor. After viewing acclaimed French film “Night and Fog,” one commented, “If you’re going to get 120 million viewers, maybe you have to sweeten it a little.”⁴⁵ Student reactions were again quite varied. At the Hebrew Academy of Nassau County, a Rabbi asked a class of 26 if another Holocaust could occur. Twenty-two indicated that they agreed it could happen again. One student indicated that her fears were at least partially assuaged by the existence of the nation of Israel. The educational implications of “Holocaust” were already demonstrative before the final episode of the miniseries had even aired. Universities, and increasingly high schools were slowly becoming a space to engage in discussion regarding the historical event of the Holocaust.⁴⁶

enough.” Some letters to the editor that appeared in the *New York Times* accused O’Connor of being overly critical of commercial television, a claim he continued to push.

⁴⁵ *Night and Fog*, DVD, directed by Alain Resnais (1955; New York City, NY: The Criterion Collection, 2003).

⁴⁶ John Hildebrand, “From Television to Classroom,” *Newsday*, 18 April 1978, 3A. Again, this author notes that the march through Skokie, IL was a topic of conversation beyond the state of Illinois. University students of the Jewish Students Association at Jt. John’s University in Jamaica indicated their unease at the march by staging a protest by conducting a program that connected with the airing of *Holocaust*. Students overseeing the events felt the television program increased attendance at the protest.

Another *New York Times* piece looked to contextualize the impact the program had on youth. One senior from Abraham Lincoln High School in San Francisco wrote, “My concept of World War II has changed very much. I didn’t know that Germany gave the extermination that much priority. It changed my opinion of Nazis, too. They came across as much more evil than I had thought of them.” A twenty-one year-old youth from Miami noted that, “Young people know most facts about these atrocities, but they shouldn’t be brought up again.”⁴⁷ *The Christian Science Monitor* also published reactions to the miniseries. One person was quoted as saying that, “Perhaps for the time being, the issues of the Holocaust are still ‘too hot,’ too alive, too fraught with deeper meanings for the television screen.” The author then considered the ramifications of the program, noting, “In a sense, it might be said many people today are actually caught in an uneasy ‘double bind’ when they begin to think about the meanings of the Holocaust. They fear what will happen if they are obsessed by them. They fear what will happen if they forget them.” These considerations force some people to “understand the pervasive existence of evil in such a recent part of the past destroys complacency and raises all sorts of questions about the possibility of building a just human community in the future. Worse even is the fear that to come to terms with the fateful origins of that evil in a specific time and place of contemporary history may lead to a reluctant exoneration of those who succumbed to it in the past and a cynical acceptance of it in our own lives today.”⁴⁸ These comments represent, on the one hand, the varied responses to and reactions to the miniseries. But furthermore, they also demonstrate the extent to which much of the American public was beginning to come to terms with the historical event of the Holocaust, as well as the emotional ramifications that entails. The historical

⁴⁷ Richard F. Shepard, “TV’s Story of Nazi Terror Brings High Ratings and Varied Opinions,” *New York Times*, 18 April 1978, 78.

⁴⁸ Richard M. Hunt, “TV’s ‘Holocaust’ – after the controversies,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 29 June 1978, 23.

specificity of the U.S. in context of the Holocaust permeates these reactions and informs them. It also highlights the increased role of education in beginning to cope with these reactions.

The number of viewers that tuned in to watch “Holocaust” provided a significant opportunity to better understand the greater U.S. public’s response to the series, as well as opinions regarding the historical event of the Holocaust. How much did people know about the historical realities of the Holocaust? What did they think about it? The American Jewish Committee conducted a nationwide survey approximately two to three weeks following the airing of the program. Questions focused awareness of the historical event itself, but more directly on American perceptions of Jews, as well as Israel.⁴⁹ In terms of the impact that the program had on the public, a number of questions were posed. When asked an open ended question regarding the impression “Holocaust” left on them, 27% of viewers (the most often cited responses) were of the horror and senselessness of the Holocaust. The second most frequent responses pertained to the educative qualities of the event. Nineteen percent of viewers claimed that “Holocaust” had a lesson to teach. That lesson was that an event like this cannot happen again.⁵⁰ While questions concerning the viewer’s understanding of the Holocaust and Nazism in general were prominent, again education was raised. Respondents were asked, “Do you think it is a good idea to teach children about things like what the Nazis did, or do you think this is not a good idea?” Sixty-five percent answered that yes, teaching the Holocaust to children is a “good idea” and only 20% disagreed.⁵¹ Perhaps the emphasis on teaching the Holocaust has to do with how “well informed” much of the viewing public was. Only 35% of all viewers considered

⁴⁹ The American Jewish Committee, “Americans Confront the Holocaust,” *International Journal of Political Education* 4 (1981): 5-19. Although lacking in analysis, this survey data represents some of the stronger reactions to the miniseries and demonstrates the basic understanding of the Holocaust that many in the U.S. had. However, there were a number of other alarming trends that became apparent, specifically the continued existence of anti-Semitism and even hate groups that outwardly demonstrated their contempt for Jewish people.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

themselves “well informed,” and when these percentages were disaggregated by age, only 20% of viewers ages 18-29 responded that they were well informed, with non-viewers in that age range responding only 12% as “well informed.”⁵² Results of the survey indicated that many people had generally positive reactions to the program in terms of its benefit in education, as well as civic duty. However, it did also call to attention the continued anti-Semitism that remained in the U.S. Overwhelmingly, viewers wrote and called NBC to express positive reactions. Yet, approximately 25% of all the mail that NBC received regarding the Holocaust was unfavorable. Two percent of that unfavorable mail was openly anti-Semitic, claiming Jewish stereotypes as well as Holocaust denial.⁵³ These responses indicate that for the most part, the American public not only approved of learning about the historical event of the Holocaust, but also thought that it could teach lessons that would help create a better society. While mostly idealistic, these results also reveal the remaining hatred for Jewish people and outright denial of the Holocaust. Both indicated that programs focusing on teaching the Holocaust were to become more popular, for a variety of reasons.

Although problematic, “Holocaust” generated much scholarly interest, generating questions regarding content, memory, education, accomplishments, and many others. In terms of the impact of the series, Tom Dreisbach went so far as to hint that the miniseries could have helped spur the creation of the Holocaust Memorial Council which later was responsible for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.⁵⁴ An interesting parallel that Dreisbach notes is the openness with which both the U.S. and West German contexts were open to dialogue. Noting,

⁵² Ibid., 11.

⁵³ Ibid., 19.

⁵⁴ Tom Dreisbach, “Transatlantic Broadcasts: Holocaust in America and West Germany,” *Penn History Review* 16 (2009): 76. See also Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), Judith Doneson, *The Holocaust in American Film* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2002), and Samantha Power, “To Suffer by Comparison,” *Daedalus* 128 (1999): 31-66, for contextualization of the *Holocaust* miniseries as it impacted the American viewing public.

“By the time of the broadcast of Holocaust both nations had begun a renaissance of open discourse about the Holocaust in political and cultural forums. This striking parallelism speaks greatly to the function of memory for victims, perpetrators, and many neutral actors of the United States; the urge to forget is sometimes universal.”⁵⁵ Focusing on the differing reaction by the media in both the U.S. and West Germany, Dreisbach claims that the “disparity in media responses reflects the greater inherent meaning of Holocaust remembrance as an *end* [italic that of author] in West Germany, while the American media treated Holocaust remembrance as a *means*, a vehicle for teaching universal lessons.”⁵⁶ Even the negative aspects of the miniseries: the trivialization, the fictionalized drama, the narrow scope of two families, provided an opportunity for others to respond and fill the void left by the program. Prominent Screen writer Paddy Chayefsky commented on how the Holocaust would be trivialized. In creating television, he argued, “I’ve have had to make a soap opera of the whole thing...you have to capsulize a lot of emotion, and you have to overdramatize things...Trivialization is television.”⁵⁷ The very format of television requires that events, including the Holocaust, can only at best be portrayed in a superficial manner. This distortion of the event was a necessary component in the process of creating the mini-series. The result, though, was an public engagement with the Holocaust on a grand scale resulting in further interest in general, and other aspects as well. “The most lasting and directly measurable impact of “Holocaust” in America’s remembrance of the Holocaust was the creation of the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale.”⁵⁸ These efforts

⁵⁵ Ibid., 80-81.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 83.

⁵⁷ Annette Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust, Third Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3.

⁵⁸ Dreisbach, “Transatlantic Broadcasts,” 88. Officially launched on June 28, 1979, the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies is a collection of approximately 4400 videotaped interviews of witnesses and survivors of the Holocaust. Housed in Yale University’s Department of Manuscripts and Archives in the Sterling Memorial Library, the effort was officially known as the Holocaust Survivors Film Project. A small set of examples have been provided here: <http://www.library.yale.edu/testimonies/> and provide a brief glimpse into the project.

memorial efforts serve both for remembrance as well as for educational purposes. To that end, *Holocaust* was an incredibly profound force on the American public and its understanding of the Holocaust.

A number of scholars provided insights on the impact of the program in a special edition of the *International Journal of Political Education*, which dedicated an entire issue in May 1981 to pieces focusing on the miniseries. Beginning with the survey conducted by the American Jewish Committee, the issue then followed with a few articles addressing the issue in the U.S. context. Many of the rest focused on the impact of the program in other countries, many of them European nations.⁵⁹ The contributions of the scholars were as varied as the reactions to the program in the various countries analyzed. In American culture, Jeffrey Shandler writes, “The powerful place that the Holocaust has achieved in contemporary American life is more than the result of an ongoing fascination with the fate of the Jews and other persecuted peoples during the Nazi era. This interest extends to concerns for the political and cultural consequences of the Holocaust, its ‘lessons,’ its proprietary rights, and its ontological implications, as well as to the nature of its representation.”⁶⁰ Unlike many of the historical events that have come to define American popular consciousness, the Holocaust impacted very few Americans directly.

⁵⁹ Special Issue: Reactions to “Holocaust,” *International Journal of Political Education*, 4 (1981): 1-179. The nations which are included in studies are Germany (specifically within the city of Frankfurt), Austria, Italy, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Israel. However, this is only a small representation of the countries that had television networks that purchased the miniseries. By May of 1979, over 40 nations had purchased and aired the program, raising the total number of viewers worldwide to more than 210 million people. See “Emotional Impact of ‘Holocaust’ Rings World-Wide,” *Variety*, 18 May 1979, 24.

⁶⁰ Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* (New York City: Oxford University Press), xi. Shandler continues, noting that, “unlike other events of modern history that have achieved iconic status in American culture – the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the civil rights movement, the assassination of President Kennedy, America’s military intervention in Vietnam and the antiwar movement, the Watergate scandal – the Holocaust touched only a small number of Americans directly; it did not take place in the United States, nor was it engendered by national policies. And yet the Holocaust looms large in the American moral landscape, where it has become commonplace to articulate the high magnitude of a social wrong by deeming it ‘another Holocaust’” (xi-xii). See also Jeffrey Shandler, “Schindler’s Discourse: America Discusses the Holocaust and its Mediation, from NBC’s Miniseries to Spielberg’s Film,” in *Spielberg’s Holocaust: Critical Perspectives on Schindler’s List*, ed. Yosefa Loshintzky (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997), 153-168.

However, the level of engagement, reflection, and discussion of the Holocaust was wildly unprecedented. That interest would only continue to grow.

Annette Insdorf has written extensively on the Holocaust as a medium for film as well as television. Regarding NBC's "Holocaust," she wrote it "heightened awareness of both the historical facts and the problems of how to dramatize them on film...from the power of sensitizing, to the danger of romanticizing and trivializing."⁶¹ Again, despite its numerous historical flaws, Insdorf notes that many that initially criticized the miniseries eventually conceded that it did achieve some fundamental goals in promoting the Holocaust in U.S. public consciousness. Not only was it a topic worth discussing, it should be discussed. The power of the program was that, "drama could have more emotional power than documentary, that trivialized information was better than none, and that the history of the Final Solution could be made accessible only through dramatic presentation."⁶² Indeed, she continued that movies and films that engage and address the themes present in the Holocaust provide a necessary connection between past and present. "They preserve the reality of the past while provoking the necessary questions of the present. This is not to say that stories like "Holocaust" should be condemned or even ignored; in these times, *any* [italics that of author] film that tackles this subject with visibly good intentions is brave, if not commendable."⁶³ Drawing on the films that have been produced before and since "Holocaust," Insdorf's analysis seeks to contextualize and understand the impact of the program, and how it allowed for more film makers to create movies and television, and also asserted that the greater U.S. public was interested in and wanted more of these programs.

⁶¹ Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows*, 4. For comparisons between *Holocaust* and other Holocaust-themed films such as *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Judgment at Nuremberg*, and *Night and Fog*, also see Annette Insdorf, "Cinema and the Holocaust," *International Journal of Political Education* 4 (1981): 173-180.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 240-241.

Beyond the general public, “Holocaust” provided more ammunition for Wisconsin Democratic Senator William Proxmire. Although the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948, the treaty languished in the Senate. Beginning in 1967, Proxmire gave near daily speeches on the Senate floor calling for the immediate ratification of the genocide convention treaty. Calling on fellow Senators to act, Proxmire hoped, “that Senators will take this opportunity to watch this remarkable program on NBC and will examine their conscience and their heart and recognize the responsibility that we have here in the Senate to act, and I do hope that in spite of the fact that we are moving along this year...that treaty up for action after 30 long years of waiting.”⁶⁴ Although the Senate would not ratify the genocide treaty until 1986, “Holocaust” was also a topic on the floor of the House of Representatives. The first episode of “Holocaust” coincided with the Jewish holiday of Passover. California Representative Glenn Anderson drew attention to these two events and called for reflection. Further commenting on the lessons that the Holocaust can teach, Anderson urged, “And let us think and consider how the complacency of many can allow the hatred of a few to reign. That, to me, is the lesson of the ‘Holocaust.’ It is not a lesson that the world has yet learned.”⁶⁵ Also focusing on issues of human rights, Anderson praised President Carter for his actions bringing awareness to rights issues around the world. The lessons that the Holocaust could teach would only continue to diversify.

In the coming decade, the voices of many called on education systems to provide the kind of engagement with the historical event of the Holocaust that many individuals were clamoring. As universities and private schools had already begun to offer these kinds of programs, public

⁶⁴ Senator Proxmire (WI), “Holocaust – Why the Genocide Treaty Should Be Ratified Now,” *Congressional Record* (17 April 1978), S10248-10249.

⁶⁵ Representative Anderson (CA), “Passover and ‘The Holocaust,’” *Congressional Record* (18 April 1978) p. H10594.

schools and districts across the nation were also beginning to address the need for Holocaust education. Events nationally and specifically within Illinois further propelled the Holocaust into the public consciousness. This reciprocal effect between greater permeation in society compounded with increased curricular attention to the Holocaust assured that it would continue to be a familiar component of popular culture in the U.S. While it would take another decade for the first state to make study of the Holocaust mandatory in its public schools, academic attention flocked to the Holocaust. The seemingly infinite lessons that the Holocaust could teach were the primary motivations to increase the importance of the event in school curricula. Other events, particularly the planned march by the American Nazi Party through the streets of Skokie, Illinois, galvanized public demand for Holocaust education. These demands were handled differently across the country in a number of different contexts. While the NBC TV miniseries "Holocaust" provided a narrative of the Holocaust that was essentially a soap opera, it nevertheless reached and impacted many Americans, presenting the Holocaust to a mass audience no other cultural product had been able to accomplish by that week in April of 1978. It was clear that the nation wanted to know more about the historical event of the Holocaust.

Chapter Three: Opportunities and Challenges: The Development of Holocaust Curricula, 1978-1987

This chapter details the development of the Holocaust as an increasing subject of study in the nation's schools first in the greater United States followed by the specific context which led directly to Illinois creating the first educational mandate on the subject. The permeation of aspects of popular culture referencing the Holocaust, as well as a proposed march through a suburb of Chicago by the National Socialist Party of America focused individuals within the state to organize and later lobby for the Holocaust education mandate. Increasingly, constituents both locally and nationally began to view the apparatus of public education as a viable path to political recognition. As this chapter will demonstrate, efforts to dictate national education policy were often fruitless. However, those efforts would later come to fruition, first in the state of Illinois. That process began with the growth in the greater consciousness of the United States; several educational and governmental agencies began to craft various educational endeavors that would provide for a society dealing with its own particular difficulties. As a subject of study, the Holocaust began to appear in school districts large and small, first on the east coast, and then spreading to the Midwest and west coast by the late 1970's and 1980's. Many reasons were provided as justification for teaching the Holocaust. The most common was implementing Holocaust education as a panacea for correcting the morality of American youth. Another common goal was to teach democratic values, a broad umbrella term pertaining to creating informed, democratic global citizens capable of acting in the interests of the oppressed both domestically and abroad. Pluralism, religious and ethnic tolerance, and participation in democratic values were just some of the many lessons that the Holocaust could teach, with the

historical specificity of the event often holding a secondary status in the context of the classroom instruction.

Unsurprisingly, interest groups sought to politicize these lessons, citing decontextualized examples to bend public opinion to their particular ideological platform. The most popular Holocaust curriculum, *Facing History and Ourselves* was entrenched squarely in national debates regarding the national narrative of the Holocaust and the role of government in disseminating that national narrative. Teaching the Holocaust became equated with the very democratic ideal of liberty itself, as members of Congress debated legislation encouraging public schools to teach about the event. Beginning in Skokie, IL and then becoming a national debate on free speech and hate speech, the potential Neo-Nazi march spurred local activists in the state of Illinois to create not just a museum, but an infrastructure for disseminating curricular materials and other information on the Holocaust to the people and schools of the state of Illinois. Taken together, these events have shaped not only the context of the Holocaust as a topic of study in public schools, but also an assertion by community leaders of the moral necessity of the Holocaust as a means toward more effective public education.

The path to mandatory Holocaust education began over a decade prior to the 1989 law requiring the teaching of the event across Illinois public schools. A small suburb just north of Chicago found itself engulfed in a first amendment issue that would wind its way through the state's judicial system and ultimately to the Supreme Court of the United States. At stake was the first amendment issue regarding free speech and the freedom to peacefully assemble. In Skokie, the National Socialist Party of America petitioned to parade as part of a peaceful demonstration in 1977. After having a previous request denied by the Chicago Park District, party leader Frank Collin submitted a request to the village of Skokie to march through its streets. Following the

court battle, the party ultimately decided against marching through Skokie and held their demonstration closer to their party headquarters on the south side of Chicago. In the process, this event galvanized a community into creating and fostering a museum and later support for the creation of Illinois' Holocaust education law. From the floor of the Illinois House of Representatives, one Representative cited this rise in neo-Nazism as an explicit justification for the law.

Although a result of many interest groups and persons, the bill to create mandatory Holocaust education in the state of Illinois was a result of the specific needs legislators deemed appropriate and necessary for the youth within the state. While the law has undergone considerable amending since its creation and passage, it nonetheless reflects the desires of a populace firmly engaged in history and memory. The central questions raised by this legislation refer primarily to the role of democratic republics and their facilitation of public education. The first question seems to be, what is it that students need to know? The second question being, what is the desired outcome of learning this information? The Skokie incident, as it came to be known, also fundamentally dealt with similar questions in regards to the limits of free speech vs. hate speech and what role education plays in shaping this debate.

Inspiring several books, documentaries, and other references in popular culture, the attempted march by the National Socialist Party of America through the streets of Skokie, Illinois brought national attention to the small suburb of Chicago.⁶⁶ Following a denial from the

⁶⁶ Many books have been written about this event from a number of perspectives. David Hamlin of the American Civil Liberties Union provided an account which draws on interviews from several key individuals including Frank Collins, and six Holocaust survivors living in Skokie. David Hamlin, *The Nazi/Skokie Conflict: A Civil Liberties Battle* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1980). One author provided an undercover account of the inner workings of the National Socialist Party of America in Andy Oakley, "88": *An Undercover News Reporter's Exposé of American Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan* (Skokie, IL: P.O. Publishing Company, 1987). Other popular accounts include Aryeh Neier, *Defending My Enemy: American Nazis, the Skokie Case, and the Risks of Freedom* (New York: E.P. Dutton,

Chicago Park District to march within the city, The Party, headed by Francis “Frank” Collins, applied to several suburbs for permission to march through their municipalities. Only Skokie prepared a response to Collins and the Party. In order to secure a park as well as a permit, the Party would be required to pay a fee of \$350,000 for insurance.⁶⁷ Ultimately, this would set off a lengthy court battle between Skokie and the National Socialist Party of America culminating in the 1978 U.S. Supreme Court decision ensuring procedural safeguards for review within the state court system. These safeguards specifically uphold the Freedom of Assembly as expressed in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The U.S. Supreme Court found these procedures to be lacking, and that the Party should ultimately be allowed to march through the streets of Skokie.⁶⁸ Collins was able to recognize the potential media exposure in a civil liberties trial, compounded with the knowledge that the village of Skokie was home to thousands of Holocaust survivors.⁶⁹ Many accounts detail the mobilization of the Holocaust survivor community in Skokie, galvanized against this new but familiar foe.⁷⁰ Following the court battle, the National Socialist Party of America decided against marching through Skokie, and marched closer to their

1979), Donald Alexander Downs, *Nazis in Skokie: Freedom, Community, and the First Amendment* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), and Philippa Strum, *When the Nazis Came to Skokie: Freedom for Speech We Hate* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1999). The following texts provide analysis of the event from a Constitutional perspective: James L. Gibson and Richard D. Bingham, *Civil Liberties and Nazis The Skokie Free-Speech Controversy* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1985), Monroe H. Freedman and Eric M. Freedman, *Group Defamation and Freedom of Speech: The Relationship between Language and Violence* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), and James L. Gibson and Richard D. Bingham, “Skokie, Nazis, and the Elitist Theory of Democracy,” *Political Research Quarterly* 37 (1984): 32-47. The event would also later be lampooned in the feature film *Blues Brothers*, directed by John Landis (1980); Universal City, CA: Universal Studios Inc., 1980), DVD when the main characters (Jake and Elwood Blues played by actors John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd) happen upon a group of individuals blocking their way across a one lane bridge. A local sheriff explains that the group has just won their court case and has been allowed to march. The group members were festooned with traditional Nazi garb including swastika armbands. The scene concludes with the main characters driving through the group of Nazis, causing many of them to jump into the small creek beneath the bridge.

⁶⁷ Hamlin, *The Nazi/Skokie Conflict*, 27-28.

⁶⁸ *National Socialist Party of America et al. v. Village of Skokie*, 432 U.S. 43 (1977).

⁶⁹ Strum, *When the Nazis Came to Skokie*, 1.

⁷⁰ Lon Grahnke, “Erna I. Grans, Holocaust Survivor,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, 25 April 1999, 69; Megan O’Matz, “Holocaust Activist Erna Gans, 76,” *Chicago Tribune*, 24 April 1999, 25. Gans would later be a central figure as the Illinois legislature debated the creation of the Holocaust education mandate. Her testimony before the Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee was instrumental in passing the bill.

headquarters in southern Chicago. The village of Skokie then donated land to build the memorial, a precursor to the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center.⁷¹

In addition to museums, there were several groups that began to create curriculum guides and pedagogical strategies for teachers and school districts that were increasingly engaging the Holocaust in schools across the U.S. One of the oldest and most popular curriculums in use in many schools is *Facing History and Ourselves*, which was created in 1976 by Margot Stern Strom and William Parsons in the city of Brookline, Massachusetts. Now a global non-profit educational agency, *Facing History* currently works to provide curricular materials as well as professional development for educators and administrators regarding issues of racism, prejudice, and anti-Semitism. The primary focus of this program is to develop an educated citizenry – a common refrain for advocates of Holocaust education – not of the stereotypical “reading, writing, and ‘rithmetic,” but in a pluralistic society founded on the ideas of liberty and freedom, and then participating in those endeavors. Problematic U.S. history, (e.g. slavery, Native American genocide, manifest destiny, Japanese American internment, etc.) notwithstanding, those core values of liberty and freedom are the cornerstones of the *Facing History* curriculum. Margot Stern Strom invoked Alexis de Tocqueville in describing *Facing History* as, “based on the conviction that education in a democracy must be...an ‘apprenticeship in liberty’...it must promote the attitudes, values, and skills needed to live in freedom.”⁷² In short, this program is primarily a moral curriculum, intended to aid in a student’s ability to decide right from wrong.

This curriculum style, Thomas Fallace argues, was endemic to the “back-to-basics” movement of the mid 1970’s. Following studies that “demonstrated the rapid decline in

⁷¹ Ibid., 25.

⁷² Margot Stern Strom, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* (Brookline, MA: Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, Inc., 1994), xvi.

achievement levels and SATs scores...disgruntled parents – often led by conservative interest groups – demanded the abandonment of affective and inquiry-based learning and the return to teacher-centered instruction.”⁷³ Teachers, then, were to be the moral arbiters of not just the classroom but ultimately of how society was to act. In the extreme case of the Holocaust or other acts of genocide, that distinction seems relatively straightforward. But by their barbarousness, acts of genocide almost stand beyond the scope of history and memory. *Facing History* is a curriculum primarily engaged in history and memory, but also equally engaged in a call for civic action. Knowledge of historical transgressions is not enough to be an enlightened active member in society. Action and justice are equally as important. The final three units of the curriculum, “Judgment,” “Historical Legacies,” and “Choosing to Participate” each contain readings imploring students to be active. Readings from, “Choosing to Participate,” discuss specific examples of both local and global models of democratic participation. Indeed, the adage to “Never Forget” plays an explicit role in the program.⁷⁴ Illinois legislators employed similar arguments – for the need to remember, to be active democratic citizens – when hearings began to explore mandating the teaching of the Holocaust. While text of the bill and the units of instruction have shifted, the original purpose of memory and civic action continue to the present.

One of the first efforts to evaluate the prominent Holocaust curricula in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s was undertaken by the National Jewish Resource Center.⁷⁵ The purpose of its

⁷³ Thomas D. Fallace, “The Construction of the American Holocaust Curriculum,” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2004), 222. Fallace’s dissertation argues that in order to understand the development of Holocaust education in the U.S., it is necessary to place that development in the greater history of the social studies. Debates regarding the purpose and intent of the social studies continue to the present with roots beginning in the Progressive Era of American education.

⁷⁴ Strom, *Facing History and Ourselves*. Although still a viable and quite active organization, the main text of the curriculum has not changed since the 1994 publication.

⁷⁵ The National Jewish Resource Center was part of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership which is a far reaching training institute for rabbis serving all over North America. Founded in 1974 by Irving Greenberg, Elie Wiesel, and Steve Shaw, the Center serves as a think tank as well as resource center.

study was to determine the, “organization, instruction and effect of Holocaust instruction in four public school districts.”⁷⁶ The first curriculum was *Facing History*, in use in the Brookline, Massachusetts public schools. Created in 1973, the second was employed in New York City public schools titled *The Holocaust: A Case Study of Genocide*, published by the Commission on Jewish Studies in Public Schools of the American Association for Jewish Education. A third program was that in use by the Philadelphia public schools, which in 1976 began a program teaching the Holocaust to some secondary public school students, and in 1977 required it to be part of the world history course for all students.⁷⁷ The fourth curriculum was that in use in the Great Neck, New York, public school system located on Long Island. Over the course of 1979 to 1981, the authors investigated these curricula and compared them – but also evaluated them based on the stated objectives of each curriculum. One of the primary questions that each of the curriculum developers struggled with, which is in no way unique to teaching the Holocaust was, “How do we organize the concepts so that high school students can analyze, interpret, and eventually relate this material to their own world?”⁷⁸ Not only did the authors study the curriculum guides, they further conducted interviews with teachers and students, and conducted assessments of student work projects. Although they stressed the particularities and differences between the four programs, there were a number of overlapping concepts and goals that each touched on in some way. They determined that the *Facing History* and Philadelphia curriculums were primarily focused on aspects of social science and human behavior, the Great Neck

⁷⁶ Mary T. Glynn, Geoffrey Bock, and Karen C. Cohen, *American Youth and the Holocaust: A Study of Four Major Holocaust Curricula* (New York: National Jewish Resource Center, 1982), 1.

⁷⁷ James F. Clarity, “Philadelphia Schools to Require a Course on Nazi Holocaust,” *The New York Times*, 18 September 1977, 23. In 1977, New York City would follow suit, pursuing a course of study on the Holocaust for high school students in the public schools.

⁷⁸ Glynn, Bock, and Cohen, *American Youth and the Holocaust* (New York: National Jewish Resource Center, 1982), 9-10.

program focused more closely on the historical specificity of the Holocaust, while the New York City curriculum was honed by teachers to engage prejudice, racism, and group relationships.⁷⁹

In terms of objective facts regarding the Holocaust, the authors investigated how effective each curriculum was with regards to student learning. Evaluations demonstrated that students were learning about the event of the Holocaust across each of the four curriculums, and that providing them with a vocabulary for discussing prejudice was another critical component. However, perhaps the most important aspect, an issue that persists to the present regarding Holocaust education, is the question of moral development and judgment. Limited to one psychological instrument, the authors concluded they had found, “no evidence that students have further developed their ability to judge moral issues as a result of learning about the Holocaust.” And that furthermore, “developing an awareness of moral dilemmas does not necessarily lead to a greater development of moral judgments, such that students are better able to formulate moral choices than before.” They conclude that their psychological assessment on moral judgment may “also suggest that students are able to learn about the Holocaust without necessarily subverting the way they perceive their world and judge moral problems within it.”⁸⁰ Although these authors were able to use only one measurement to gauge moral thinking, this study does raise difficult questions regarding the ability of students to change or perceive their own personal morality through learning about the Holocaust. As will be demonstrated later, legislators and educators would argue that the value of learning about the Holocaust was not only a historical lesson, but one in fundamentally grounded in learning moral judgment.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 85.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 98-99.

If not morality, then what did these four Holocaust curriculums teach these public school high school students? Certainly all four in some way adapted the historical specificity of the Holocaust to a contemporary (1979-1981) public high school environment in the United States. This process can be described as an “Americanization” of the event in which, “the central theme of the Holocaust becomes an instrument by which we teach the fundamental values of American society: democracy, pluralism and respect for difference, freedom and justice, individual responsibility, and antiracism.”⁸¹ The Holocaust was (and continues to be) removed from historical specificity, and repackaged as a lesson of democratic values. The authors also were keenly aware that Holocaust education in the public schools – maybe even more so than popular culture – was the removal of the Holocaust from a specific Jewish history. However, while painful as that process may be, as precarious as the claims over learning moral judgments or truths through these curricula, the authors ultimately completed their analysis with conclusive remarks. Although distinct, the New York, Brookline, Great Neck, and Philadelphia Holocaust curriculums “had measurable, positive impact on those very values which undergird American society.”⁸² Holocaust education, at least so far, had demonstrated a strong ability to reinforce learning of key “American” values – democracy, liberty, pluralism, etc. As Holocaust education would grow in popularity over the next several years, the popularity of the Brookline, MA program would catapult it to the national stage as the largest Holocaust education program of the

⁸¹ Ibid., 123. A descriptive edited volume of scholarship describing the “Americanization” of the Holocaust, this process both, “simply groups the many ways that the Holocaust has been represented in American culture; on another it is political and theoretical quicksand, providing all the pitfalls of postulating about history, nation, and ideology.” Hilene Flanzbaum, “Introduction,” in *The Americanization of the Holocaust*, ed. Hilene Flanzbaum (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 2. Holocaust education fundamentally engages in these themes, and places them within a distinctly American context. Not only is that distinction necessary, it is precisely one of the principal functions of education – to reproduce (or postulate) nation and ideology. The editor argues that despite what scholars would desire, the onus is now toward criticism of those entities that seek to reproduce the Holocaust because, “the representation of the Holocaust has entered the realm of the common discourse” (p. 15).

⁸² Ibid., 132.

1980's. However, while successful, the creators would have a considerable battle to obtain the funding necessary to provide their curriculum beyond the state of Massachusetts.

As one of the first and most popular Holocaust curriculums from the 1970's and into the 1980's, *Facing History* looked to expand out of Massachusetts to meet demand for their product. Drawing an operating budget primarily through charitable donations, in both 1986 and 1987 *Facing History* applied for U.S. Department of Education grants to help expand across the country through a program aimed at providing funding specifically for that purpose. The National Diffusion Network was a program created by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1974.⁸³ The purpose of this network was to, "help school systems nationwide become aware of educational programs that have been effective elsewhere. Some projects focus on traditional subjects while others are aimed at talented students, vocational schools or health training."⁸⁴ The grant applications were subject to review by the Department of Education, and then assessed before funds were distributed. These reviews were conducted by the Program Significance Panel. In applying for Diffusion Network grants, *Facing History* submitted an application which would subsequently be denied, after originally becoming part of the Network in December of 1980. From that point until the denial of funding in 1986, *Facing History* was included as part of the National Diffusion Network, and being used in 243 public schools and 24 public schools reaching some 20,000 students.⁸⁵ While many programs were denied funding, the case of *Facing History's* Holocaust curriculum provided so much intrigue and public debate that it spawned a hearing before a Subcommittee of the Committee on

⁸³ The National Diffusion Network would come under the jurisdiction of the newly created Department of Education in 1979 during the Carter administration. The Network continued to provide grants to educational programs and services until Congress legislated the end of the program as part of a cost-cutting initiative in 1995.

⁸⁴ Ed Vulliamy, "Holocaust Project Funds: 'Eliminated' by Ideology?," *Washington Post*, 4 October 1988, A17.

⁸⁵ Department of Education's Refusal to Fund Holocaust Curriculum, House of Representatives, 100th Cong. 4 (1989) (Statement of Bruno Manno, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Operations, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education).

Government Operations of the House of Representatives in October of 1988. Several members of the Department of Education, as well as Michael Berenbaum, professor of the Holocaust and theology from Georgetown University, and *Facing History* director, Margot Stern Strom testified before the subcommittee. The testimony provided in this hearing raised a number of questions surrounding the Holocaust. Why should we teach the Holocaust? What viewpoints do we teach? Is there a separation of church and state issue? How can teachers effectively teach moral reasoning? Should public school educators be teaching morality?

Several *Washington Post* pieces initially reported on the denial of funding to the *Facing History* curriculum. Democratic Representative from New York Ted Weiss wrote to Secretary of Education Lauro F. Cavazos inquiring as to why the program had been denied a grant of \$70,000 to help disseminate it further into the country.⁸⁶ The opening remarks openly attacked the Department of Education for institutional bias with Chairman Theodore Weiss, Democrat from New York citing the Department of Education's comments calling *Facing History*, "anti-Christian," and were rejected because it, "did not reflect the Nazi point of view."⁸⁷ These comments belonged to a single reviewer – Christina Jeffrey – whom had made the claims that the program, in addition to anti-Christian, also did not include the views of the Ku Klux Klan. Jeffrey had been a political scientist at Troy State University and Kennesaw State University, and provided the review to the Department. The review and hearing itself were politicized both by the Michael Dukakis campaign in 1988, as well as in 1995 when Christina Jeffrey was appointed as the Historian of the House of Representatives by House Speaker Newt Gingrich.

⁸⁶ Ibid., A17. See also Special to the *New York Times*, "Fund Denial for Holocaust Course is Upheld," *The Washington Post*, 5 January 1989, A19.

⁸⁷ Department of Education's Refusal to Fund Holocaust Curriculum, House of Representatives, 100th Cong. 1-2 (1989) (Opening Statement of Theodore Weiss, Chairman, Human Resources and Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee).

Her review of *Facing History* was quickly thrust back into the public eye, and she was dismissed mere days upon starting.

Although a public display of governmental hand-wringing toward the Department of Education, the hearing did little to alter the decision made by the Program Significance Panel. Instead, the National Diffusion Network completely removed the category that *Facing History* was applying to – history, geography, and civics.⁸⁸ All programs under the umbrella ceased to receive funding. Again in 1988 *Facing History* applied for a Department of Education grant aimed at providing curriculum materials for schools without their own source of funding for the program, and again were denied. However, after initially denying the grant, the next day the Department of Education overturned its decision, and approved a four year renewable grant of \$59, 367 to *Facing History*. The decision was not beyond speculation of political tampering. Conservative groups tended to be opposed to the teaching of the Holocaust. A particularly vocal opponent of *Facing History* was Phyllis Schlafly, President of the Eagle Forum. Founded by Schlafly in 1972, the Eagle Forum was a conservative interest group (that later spawned the Eagle Forum Education and Legal Defense Fund and Eagle Forum Political Action Committee) with a central policy platform focused around “pro-family” policies and other socially conservative efforts. Arguments against *Facing History* from Schlafly and the Eagle Forum were deeply rooted in a neo-conservative Cold War ideology that circled back to the importance of the family, and all attention must be paid to the current enemy (the Soviet Union). The Eagle Forum, and Schlafly specifically, described *Facing History* as, “psychological manipulation,” and that it,

⁸⁸ Vulliamy, “Holocaust Project Funds,” A17. Vulliamy notes that this was the only academic category that was eliminated. Four other categories were also eliminated due to redundancy in other programs, or other concerns regarding decisions of funding. Max McClonkey, the executive director of the National Dissemination Study group was also quoted as saying that, “There was nothing deficient about this program, and there are no other programs of its kind in this area,” adding further speculation that Holocaust education, on a national level suffered from the politicization of conservative interest groups.

“induced behavioral change and privacy-invading treatment.” Others called it “profoundly offensive to fundamentalists and evangelicals,” “anti-war, anti-hunting,” as well as likely to “induce a guilt trip.”⁸⁹ Accordingly, *Facing History* was seen as “morally corrosive for high school students,” causing them to “dwell on such events.” Instead, conservatives wanted high school students to learn of the crimes of the Soviet Union and Communism.⁹⁰

Not all criticism of *Facing History* was specifically from conservative interest groups. Noted Holocaust scholar Lucy Dawidowicz was asked in 1988 to write on behalf of the *Facing History* program to justify federal funding.⁹¹ Dawidowicz noted, “I never did so, for my own reading of the curriculum persuaded me that the Department of Education had ample reason to turn down the grant application,” because in addition to teaching the Holocaust, *Facing History* was also, “a vehicle for instructing thirteen-year-olds in civil disobedience and indoctrinating them with propaganda for nuclear disarmament.”⁹² Dawidowicz problematized the notion of teaching the Holocaust as simply the “Jewish branch of oppression studies,” and that while relatively popular now, it couldn’t “always compete with other more fashionable or better organized ‘causes.’”⁹³ While these broader concerns present a more conservative view on education, many have echoed Dawidowicz’s critiques of several Holocaust curriculums,

⁸⁹ Ibid. See also Bill McAllister, “Education Dept. Clears Holocaust Study Grant,” *Washington Post*, 27 September 1989, A15.

⁹⁰ Stephen Labaton, “Hello. Goodbye.; The Short History of a House Historian,” *The New York Times*, 15 January 1995, sec.4 pg. 2.

⁹¹ Noted works include Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975), and Lucy Dawidowicz, *The Holocaust and the Historians* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

⁹² Lucy Dawidowicz, “How they Teach the Holocaust,” *Commentary*, 90 no. 6 (December, 1990): 25. Dawidowicz’s comments also lend credence to a particularly conservative approach to the teaching of history. It also seems that *Facing History* took notice of these concerns, and while the curriculum is still heavily influenced with civic action, the references to nuclear armament were removed for the 1994 publication of their materials.

⁹³ Ibid. The other “causes” Dawidowicz mentions specifically are Blacks in American history and culture, Hispanics, Native Americans, and women. These causes are tied to a critique of U.S. or even Eurocentric hegemony, and Dawidowicz argues that they will increasingly cut into time resources meant for teaching the Holocaust. She argues that the Holocaust is more important than these other causes, but will simply be conflated with these other studies.

including *Facing History*. In general, most of the 25 curricula she reviewed had two goals – to teach about the event itself, and to provide some kind of moral education. This moral education was often couched in an ideal of democratic values. Although a broad range of ideas, Holocaust education has tried to teach morality primarily to “instill respect for racial, religious, and cultural differences, and to foster a commitment to democratic values,” as well as a sense of “‘individual responsibility’ as against ‘obedience to authority’ as keys to moral behavior.”⁹⁴ Consistently lacking, Dawidowicz argues, is an attention to the sanctity of human life. Ultimately, this lapse in content is what Dawidowicz claims to be the strongest critique for the majority of Holocaust education curriculums.

The problematic nature of teaching morality, Dawidowicz argues, is embedded within a moral climate of a society of people with relativistic attitudes toward the crime of murder. Instead of facing this failure, Dawidowicz notes the moral lessons which are taught – inappropriately – through the narrative of the Holocaust. For example, a curriculum in use in the New Jersey public school system, *Student Anthology*, calls for students to respond to oppression. These “modern” examples of oppression were said to raise questions regarding how students think and understand how injustice occurs and what, if anything, the Holocaust can inform student understanding regarding these events. The examples of oppression given include Maryknolls in El Salvador and the American civil rights movement, with no connection to specific Holocaust history. Instead of utilizing a pedagogy that called for students to make comparative distinctions between events, these other events were presented simply alongside the Holocaust without a greater framework for their understanding. Another curriculum contained a number of activities focusing on peace education, which Dawidowicz notes was popular in the

⁹⁴ Ibid., 27.

1980's. More problematic is the context of the moral lessons, which is couched in a language of moral choice. These choices are generally placed in a Holocaust context and then extrapolated out to other possible future moral decisions that students may encounter. These moral choices are usually found to be decisions between either “conforming (which is immoral) or resisting (moral),” or between “obeying authority (bad) or following the dictates of one’s conscience (good).”⁹⁵

However, while these critiques are focused on questions of morality and in many ways contain a number of inherent ambiguities, Dawidowicz holds the strongest critiques for the *Facing History* curriculum. The first is the agenda stated previously regarding nuclear proliferation and the call for teachers and students to become activists in a world dominated by nuclear weapons. Dawidowicz notes that the lack of action toward nuclear issues is tantamount to failing to stand up to a new (nuclear) Holocaust. The next major criticism of *Facing History* pertains to the manner in which the curriculum engages moral questions of obedience and conformity. Dawidowicz argues that the *Facing History* curriculum “undertakes to teach its students that obedience and conformity are not morally admirable qualities,” claiming that obedience is a necessary component of totalitarian societies.⁹⁶ This understanding of both the Third Reich, as well as other totalitarian societies, critically decontextualizes the manner in which those societies operate in regard to societal control. Whether through fear or other emotion, that motivation can work to override moral choices that individuals would otherwise act upon. Instead, *Facing History* and other Holocaust curricula rely on an individual’s own conscience. However, Dawidowicz offers that no curriculum is able to “question the reliability of conscience as a guide to distinguishing between good and bad, right and wrong.... Furthermore,

⁹⁵ Ibid., 30.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

the consciences of different people within the same society or in different societies vary widely.”⁹⁷ The failures of *Facing History* and many of the other curriculums that Dawidowicz reviewed stem from the inability to engage in the crime of murder and the value of human life. These failures are couched in Dawidowicz’s larger claim of the failure of the public education system in the U.S. – going so far as to calling education a national scandal. Even with the critiques raised, Dawidowicz claimed to be in favor of Holocaust education as a worthy topic of study by high school children in the U.S. In response to these criticisms, *Facing History* revised their curricula over the next few years by removing comments regarding nuclear proliferation, and addressing many of the other concerns leveled by Dawidowicz and others. Although certainly not perfect, the editorial changes demonstrated an understanding of the criticisms and worked to satisfactorily rectify many of them.

Conservative *Boston Globe* columnist Jeff Jacoby continued the critiques of *Facing History* following its updated and revised curriculum guide published in 1994. By this point, *Facing History* claimed to be taught to over 500,000 students. This release went far in addressing the comments and concerns that Dawidowicz raised regarding what the program was teaching students. However, the revisions - according to Jacoby - hadn’t gone far enough. Instead, Jacoby claimed that what the *Facing History* curriculum achieved was a complete removal of the Holocaust from its historical context. Jacoby claims that the new curriculum “pushes students to see contemporary America as a latter-day Weimar Republic, slipping down the slope that leads to Dachau.”⁹⁸ In addition, the lack of inclusion of modern anti-Semitism is an oversight that is particularly problematic. The practical example Jacoby harps on is the inclusion of Louis Farrakhan in the curriculum, comparing his speech with that of Adolf Hitler. Many others found

⁹⁷ Ibid., 31.

⁹⁸ Jeff Jacoby, “What ‘Facing History’ Really Teaches,” *The Boston Globe*, 17 January 1995, 9.

reason to criticize the most widely available Holocaust curriculum. Criticism over simply teaching the event of the Holocaust was, and continues to be almost entirely absent. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of people favored teaching the event. Although flawed, the popularity these curricula demonstrate that schools all across the U.S. were determined to teach about the Holocaust, and there were many choices from which to choose in pursuing that endeavor. Dawidowicz evaluated three different curricula in use in the state of Illinois from Champaign for middle school students, Chicago for middle schools students, and Evanston school districts. She did not have any specific comments directed toward these programs in use in the state of Illinois.

While Lucy Dawidowicz may have faulted *Facing History* for instilling moral relativism, other scholars have determined that human rights education – specifically the *Facing History* curriculum – has a positive impact on the moral development of students. In measuring the psychological impact of learning about the Holocaust with the moral development of students, Mary Brabeck and Maureen Kenny sought to determine the overall impact of this subject matter. They were not evaluating the historical content of *Facing History*, but instead sought to see what benefits in moral reasoning the curriculum may have. These benefits are often what is sought when legislators and educators advocate for teaching about the Holocaust. While the historical context is important, it is often overshadowed by arguments for increasing aspects of moral reasoning as well as producing informed, democratic, global citizens. As Brabeck and Kenny found, the *Facing History* curriculum can aid students in that “deliberate and informed discussions of human rights issues can promote moral reasoning and behavior.”⁹⁹ While this curriculum was ripe for criticism, the debate over how and where the Holocaust was to be taught, in what context, has informed how this event has been presented to students across the United

⁹⁹ Mary Brabeck and Maureen Kenny, “Human Rights Education through the ‘Facing History and Ourselves’ Program,” *Journal of Moral Education* 23 (October 1994): 343.

States. While arguably flawed, and sometimes lacking, teaching the Holocaust filled a niche in public schools that focused primarily around moral education and creating morally upstanding democratic citizens. However problematic, the Holocaust was increasingly viewed as a means to teach students right from wrong. As will be seen later, the Holocaust as an historical event was coopted and then compared to other acts – in many historical contexts – to teach lessons on morality.

In 1995 another Holocaust historian, Deborah Lipstadt, also commented on *Facing History* and the state of Holocaust education in general.¹⁰⁰ Serving two terms on the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, Lipstadt has notoriety for confronting Holocaust denial, including a court battle over alleged libelous comments with Holocaust denier David Irving, which she won. Lipstadt also weighed in on the *Facing History* curriculum, and as a member of the Holocaust Memorial Council, provide comments less incendiary but still critical. Beginning by addressing the Department of Education scandal, Lipstadt declared *Facing History* “the most influential model for teaching the Holocaust in the United States yet is deeply flawed.”¹⁰¹ Primarily taught to 8th and 9th graders, Lipstadt praises aspects of the curriculum including the attention paid to history of anti-Semitism, economic and political antecedents from the Weimar Republic, the rise and influence of the Nazi party, and even engages questions surrounding how individuals might have acted to stop it. As Dawidowicz commented, Lipstadt agrees that *Facing History* removes the Holocaust from historical context in order to teach moral lessons to students in the present. “It presents lessons in moral reasoning and good (American) citizenship; as an object lesson, a generic inoculation against prejudice.” Continuing that, “The problem with this

¹⁰⁰ Prominent works include Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945* (New York: Free Press, 1986); *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York: Plume, 1993); and *The Eichmann Trial* (New York: Nextbook Press, 2011).

¹⁰¹ Deborah Lipstadt, “Not Facing History,” *The New Republic* 212 Issue 10 (1995): 26.

approach is that it elides the differences between the Holocaust and all manner of inhumanities and injustices.”¹⁰² By removing the Holocaust from historical context, students are given an account that serves to fulfill other curricular agendas.

Again discussing the call for nuclear proliferation protest, Lipstadt echoed Dawidowicz’s critiques that *Facing History* intended to create active protestors and providing them with materials upon request for such aims. As Lipstadt notes, the 1994 publication of the *Facing History* curriculum eliminated the comments calling for active protest from students, but retained comments regarding the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as evidence of the dangers of nuclear proliferation. However, as critical as Lipstadt is of the *Facing History* curriculum, her comments as to its benefits are more extensive than Dawidowicz’s. As a Holocaust educator, Deborah Lipstadt saw many of her own objectives in the curriculum. Mirroring *Facing History*, Lipstadt also strives for, “making my students more sensitive to ethnic and religious hatred, cognizant that ‘little’ prejudices can easily be transformed into far more serious ones and inclined to speak about injustice when they confront it.” But instead of pushing students toward a particular moral outcome, Lipstadt instead urges that, “students must draw their own comparisons. I teach the particulars. I let the students apply them to their own universe. They never fail to do so.”¹⁰³ Although her students are undergraduates, the pedagogical intent still pertains to high school and even middle school students. Although comparisons can be helpful in allowing students to develop a greater understanding of concepts of the Holocaust, reinforcing the specific historical contexts of various events is critical for many scholars. Lipstadt finished her comments by calling the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (of which she serves on the Council) the “most significant proof I know of that it is possible to make the Holocaust relevant

¹⁰² Ibid., 27.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 28.

without relativizing.”¹⁰⁴ Maintaining the historical context, while allowing for comparison allows for students create a more robust understanding of the Holocaust, and as a secondary objective, also have some semblance of moral education.

Through the 1970’s, efforts to teach the Holocaust were isolated to single school districts and cities. Scholars have typically analyzed the Holocaust programs of New York City (1977), Philadelphia (1977), and other smaller cities along the east coast in the late 1970’s as the major home to those education programs. However, school districts across the country, from the Midwest to the West Coast were also implementing Holocaust curricula. However, state governments and especially the national government did not yet begin to mandate the subject or include it in the state learning standards.

By the 1980’s, the subject had become a considerably more popular – both in popular culture, as well as a mechanism for teaching a plethora of subjects from democratic citizenship to history and to even still morality. However, that would change in 1985 in California when the state introduced a genocide study mandate, and in 1986 the U.S. Congress held a hearing before the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education of the Committee on Education and Labor.

On May 6, 1986, members of the subcommittee heard statements from Representative Sala Burton, Democrat from the state of California, as well as Sister Carol Rittner and Mark Talisman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council. A prepared statement from Representative Jim Saxton, Republican from New Jersey, was also included in the testimony of the hearing. At issue before the subcommittee was House Concurrent Resolution 121. Introduced by

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Congresswoman Burton, the resolution served two purposes. In addition to addressing the teaching of the Holocaust in U.S. public schools, the hearing also served as another aspect of Holocaust memory by official recognition from Congress. Following Yom HaShoah – Holocaust Remembrance Day – is an annual eight day period designated as the Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust. Created in 1979, House Joint resolution 1014 provided for the programs and other commemorations that were to serve as federal actions of Holocaust memory. The subcommittee hearing in 1986 fell during this week, providing a context for discussing the teaching of the Holocaust in U.S. public schools. Representative Barton’s resolution carried no mandate, and provided no financial assistance, but merely called for public schools to be encouraged to teach the Holocaust as part of their history curriculum. The resolution did not come up for a vote or debated but remained in committee. Although not enacted, the hearing generated discussion within the House of Representatives as part of the Days of Remembrance. Moreover, while demonstrative of the interest and value of teaching the Holocaust, Representative Burton’s and others comments reveal national interest in teaching about the event, but also lack the Constitutional ability to generate changes in history curricula from state to state.

Born in Poland in 1925, Representative Burton survived the Holocaust and moved to the United States following the end of World War II. Her testimony before the subcommittee rang with both personal tragedy and the drive to pursue Holocaust memory through education. Indeed, she equated education and memory claiming, “The function of ‘memory’ is essentially that of a teacher. ‘Remembrance’ is the lesson; that is, evidence of what we have learned and how we may profit from it.” So important is learning from history that to lose this ability “we would forever lose control of our own destiny.” Representative Burton describes history as not simply a

subject of study or academic discipline but a, “powerful force that has shaped the circumstances of their daily lives.”¹⁰⁵ Losing many members of her family, Burton’s comments are informed by a need to remember, and for others to remember. Critical of pedagogical techniques that seem “driven by formula,” focusing on the “senseless memorization of facts, dates and episodes,” Burton called for teachers of history to be more engaging with students. She suggested accomplishing this task in two ways. The first was a broad generalization not specific to the Holocaust, but instead on “a cumulative understanding of political, social and cultural trends, the events which characterize them and the men and women who shape them.” The second was to engage in “exploring the periods of history that are defined by unimaginable horror and human brutality.”¹⁰⁶ However, the criticism did not end with pedagogy. History textbooks were also mentioned to be superficial in their coverage of the Holocaust, aside from those found in New York and New Jersey. The year prior, the representative’s own state of California passed legislation creating a statewide curriculum for teaching human rights and genocide. Although focused primarily on the pedagogical techniques of history teaching, the representative’s comments demonstrate the desire to continue Holocaust memory, not only for historical purposes, but for the reproduction and transmission of societal values.

The next to provide testimony to the subcommittee was Mark Talisman, Vice Chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council. Talisman’s testimony provided a number of viewpoints. The first was the national agenda of the federal government, specifically how the

¹⁰⁵ Expressing the Sense of Congress that Public Schools Should be Encouraged to Include a Study of the Holocaust in their Holocaust Curriculums: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education of the Committee on Education and Labor, May 6, 1986, 99th Cong. 7 (1986) (statement of Sala Burton, Representative from California). On April 29, 1985, House Resolution 133 was introduced by the Republican Representative from New Jersey, Jim Saxton. Although introduced, the resolution was sent to committee but never received a hearing. The text of the resolution was essentially the same as House Resolution 121 from 1986 – that Congress should encourage schools to teach a curriculum on the history of the Holocaust.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Holocaust was to be represented from a national level. The second was to iterate a national narrative for Holocaust memory. Intrinsic to this discussion was the role of public education and the place of the Holocaust within it. However, Talisman began his testimony with a scathing indictment of a Congress unwilling to rescue the Jews of Europe during World War II. In addition to the Jews of Europe, Talisman also specifically mentioned the fate of the Sinti and Roma population which was also deemed necessary for destruction. Other groups targeted by the Nazis, including homosexuals, those guilty of political crimes, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others were not mentioned in the testimony. Not only at fault was Congress, but Talisman continued a critique of the Holocaust in history textbooks. He claimed that the "history books, used today by every middle and high school in most jurisdictions in the United States makes no serious mention of this dark period. It has been expunged from history."¹⁰⁷ While textbooks were considered lacking, Talisman commented on a teacher training program in Montgomery County, Maryland, outside of Washington D.C. which provided an excellent curriculum for instruction on the Holocaust. Other curricula in place across the country were mentioned as well for their quality instruction, yet the purpose of the Resolution is to address the school systems which were not adequately teaching the Holocaust.

Vice Chairman Talisman returned to a familiar chorus in his final comments, reiterating the necessity of moral education, and the value of teaching the Holocaust can provide for such instruction. He returned to describe human nature, reminding the subcommittee that "We must also know the depths to which we can plummet because we do not know... Ignorance is never a valid excuse for the horrors which can and are committed by millions of good people who do nothing." The key to subverting this lack of action, for Talisman, was the attention to memory.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 8.

After commenting that all fifty states participated in the Days of Remembrance, Talisman recalled the House Resolution passed in 1980, which encouraged “states and synagogues to speak on this moral issue...ministers and rabbis throughout the country took up the challenge.” This challenge also extended to “educational leadership,” to help save the youth of the nation from ignorance, “so that their children will remember where the world has come, to know in their hands where it must go.” This continual negotiation between memory and action for the future was central to the narrative regarding teaching the Holocaust. It was the justification for teaching about the Holocaust from not just a historical standpoint, but also a potential future for society as well, driven by morally upstanding citizens. These statements regarding what Holocaust education could provide in terms of citizenship and morality have ultimately dictated the framing of the Holocaust as a subject of study in public schools in the U.S. Talisman ended his testimony citing U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council Chairman and Holocaust scholar Elie Wiesel. “Remembrance is to know and understand so that through that knowledge, through our educational process in the United States, well-meaning people who are properly educated will never allow these things to happen to anyone ever again.”¹⁰⁸ Prepared comments were also provided for Vice Chairman Talisman, but the overall tone and intent of the comments reflected what he voiced to the subcommittee. These comments demonstrated a call to action for public schools across the nation. Although many had already begun instruction on the Holocaust, the national narrative from the U.S. Memorial Council was steeped in the necessity of this historical event as intrinsic to our national identity and future as U.S. citizens.

The following speaker before the subcommittee was another member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, Sister Carol Rittner. Her comments were similar to Vice Chairman

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 9.

Talisman's, but focused on the goals of public education and how the Holocaust fit into a shifting vision of what a public education was to provide to children in the U.S. This vision Rittner described was intrinsically tied to the economy and specifically technology. However, after espousing the value of an education rich in science and mathematics, Rittner claimed that "education's most noble task is to help students to become more tolerant, more respectful, more compassionate human beings."¹⁰⁹ Furthermore:

Studying about the Nazi genocide and the Holocaust provides countless opportunities for students to analyze and discuss one of the most crucial human and ethical issues which faced people then and faces people today – indifference to the fate of others, to the fate of people who are a different color, a different religion, a different ethnic origin, different sexual orientation or ideological persuasion.¹¹⁰

These "countless opportunities" that Rittner cites often become the key component of Holocaust education, shifting the focus from the historical context of the event to greater, more generalizable ideals about how to treat other individuals. She finishes reiterating this point acknowledging that "it will help all of us in studying the Holocaust to remember where we are and what we are doing and to be cognizant of the consequences of our actions, significant or insignificant that they may seem to be."¹¹¹ These educational goals, while certainly valuable, are placed almost as the most valuable component for teaching the Holocaust. Morality viewed through the lens of the Holocaust can certainly be informed by an understanding of the event. However, scholars argue that this arguably Americanizes the Holocaust, thus removing it from its historical context.

Following the testimony of Sister Carol Rittner, again Mark Talisman addressed the subcommittee in regards to documents provided from the Institute for Historical Review, documents denying the Holocaust. While Sister Rittner pressed for the universal ideals of what

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 12.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 13-14.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 14.

Holocaust education could and should provide, Talisman brought the discussion back to the historical specificity of the event in very stark terms. Of the documents provided he claimed, “It is that material that our young people are being pressed with right now for which, in fact, the antidote are the facts and good historical presentation which is fully documented...”¹¹² In closing remarks, subcommittee chairman Augustus Hawkins, Democratic representative from the state of California, commented that some anonymous individual had deposited the documents on the table for the subcommittee, but that individual was not available for questioning. Dismissing the documents with a quip, “I suppose all we can do is ignore it and I certainly hope it is ignored.” The chairman did raise a question for those in attendance pertaining to Holocaust education, however. It was a question that would again be raised in the context of states and their education curriculums, and even education mandates in the years to come. He remarked, “questions have arisen with respect to why other examples of genocide are not included why not the Armenian, why not the Cambodian. I suppose as usual we will get other suggestions for amendments to the resolution...what is your position with respect to broadening the resolution in such a way as to make it almost meaningless?”¹¹³ Representative Burton’s response also reiterates the historical specificity of the Holocaust claiming “we have to learn why it started, what happened, what Hitler tried to do, what did the country that he became chancellor of do in his name?” This distinction is critical for Representative Burton in that other acts of genocide do not share the same historical context of the Holocaust. “I think this is quite different, and I think that it does not belong in this resolution,” but she finishes by affirming she is, “a firm supporter of the Armenian peoples wanting sort of comment on man’s inhumanity to man...unfortunately, our

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 15.

State Department was not very happy with it and we did not get it through.”¹¹⁴ This distinction is critical, as the federal government did not officially (and continues to not) recognize the Armenian genocide, in favor of fostering a diplomatic relationship with the government of Turkey.

Again Vice Chairman Talisman addressed the subcommittee on Chairman Hawkins question regarding inclusion of the Armenian genocide. After commenting on some historically dubious claims regarding the origins of the word genocide, he left parting words of inspiration and placing trust in the ability of curriculum designers and teachers who would engage in teaching about the Holocaust. In some sense he argued for an almost organic motivation of these professionals, claiming that any policy from the national level to be “wrong,” insisting that, “The focus of the resolution must be on the major subject, to encourage people hopefully to address this subject. That is our hope here and I think it can only be the hope of the Congress as well...and I think it best be left at that.” Talisman’s next comments, however, are particularly interesting. Instead of going further into addressing comments regarding Holocaust education, he inquires to the subcommittee why the Smithsonian “does not properly address the American Indian...it is a separate matter that needs to be addressed...they all need to be addressed as a properly, full educational subject.”¹¹⁵ No member of the subcommittee addressed Talisman’s remark, instead Representative Mario Biaggi, Democrat from New York, argued for the passage of the resolution, as people forget over time. Citing an Anti-Defamation League poll of two Midwestern states, “42 percent of the people preferred to resist thinking about the Holocaust,” and that another poll by the American Jewish Committee found similar results among the Jewish

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 15-16.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 16.

community in the U.S.¹¹⁶ If nothing else, the resolution itself would even serve as a piece of Holocaust memory – that the Congress of the United States was not going to forget about the deaths of those during the Holocaust.

House Resolution 121, while strongly supported in the subcommittee hearing, would ultimately not pass. Instead it languished in committee, never voted into law – even only as an encouragement – lacking any kind of regulatory or oversight capability. There were no fiscal concerns over the resolution either, as local schools would be left to their own resources to provide instruction to their students. Teaching the Holocaust would not be a national educational effort. Entangled in the politics of federal agencies and vested interest groups, there were too many parties that had ample interest in either amending or obstructing House Resolution 121 from passage. However, as was noted in the hearing, educators were left to create and implement curricula on the Holocaust. States would do exactly that, with California the previous year, and Illinois in 1989, and other states into the 1990's. Although not specific to Holocaust education, the state of California introduced the first statewide expectation that human rights were to be a priority in the state public education system, of which the Holocaust was a secondary consideration. Each program represented a distinctly local form of Holocaust education. Some focused more on historical specificity, others on democratic citizenship, pluralism, and especially on moral education and judgment. While states began to address the Holocaust as a vehicle for teaching these various ideas, the implementation would certainly be unique to each state and their educational curriculum. The states that saw the most far sweeping mandates were those that already had Holocaust curriculums active in major cities in the states, particularly New York and

¹¹⁶ Ibid. In Talisman's response to this polling information, he refers to a poll in a national teen magazine, but does not have the title or citation. In the poll, teens were asked, "to identify 40 illustrious historical figures...Hitler's name arose and 39 percent of the young people present who sent in the material indicated he was a rock star" (page 17).

New Jersey. States such as California, Illinois, and Florida would also provide broad mandates on the teaching of the Holocaust.

While the subcommittee heard testimony to the merits of Holocaust education, the same day the U.S. Congress held similar hearings on the House floor. Numerous Representatives espoused the necessity of remembering the Holocaust, reiterating various anecdotes from the period. The 1986 Days of Remembrance allowed for Representatives to also reaffirm many national objectives and ideals. Certainly Holocaust memory was the critical component of the comments spoken on the House floor. Yet there were other agendas that Representatives sought to extrapolate upon. Many Representatives commented on vague “lessons” that the Holocaust can and should teach, yet few offered more substantive insights. Until Democratic Representative from New Jersey William Hughes linked the Holocaust with the democratic values of citizenship and morality that all within the nation should espouse. Many of these lessons were of a collective nature – national memory. For example, Representative Hughes noted that the Holocaust can remind us “that we must never forget the lessons to be learned from the darkest time in our history. Lessons of a belief in God and self that survived the oppression and hatred of the Holocaust.” However, the victims of the Holocaust were not simply martyrs. Representative Hughes described them as “symbols of strength and perseverance from which we must all learn. We must continue in their struggle to guarantee religious freedom and liberty for all those who seek it.” Instead of invoking the historical context of the Holocaust, Representative Hughes continued, placing the “lessons” of the Holocaust squarely into the interests of the United States. Instead of invoking the historical specificity of the Third Reich, Hughes remarked that the Holocaust requires the U.S. to “guard our constitutional rights of equality, religious

freedom, and liberty. We must continue to be alert to the dangers of those who want to snatch our liberty from us.”¹¹⁷

Representative Hughes comments then went further – establishing a domestic and international responsibility for the U.S. In terms of domestic education, he argued, “We must never forget the horrors of that time, so that we may prevent it from happening again. It is important to teach our children and grandchildren about the atrocities discovered by the world.” Specifically that the U.S. needs to strive to, “fight to end oppression...to look inward and work to feed the poor, house the homeless, and help the oppressed.” He continues that we must then “encourage our neighbors to continue the struggle of the victims of the Holocaust by allowing their people to practice their religion, live without fear of political retribution, and to live with each other peacefully.”¹¹⁸ Several other speakers commented on the state of the Holocaust in the U.S., often making reference to the museum which was to begin construction on the national mall. Hughes’ comments represented a national message on the place of the Holocaust within the U.S. It is a historical event that bears many lessons, many of which extend beyond the historical context of the event itself. It is an event that is meant to inspire individuals to action, to fight against injustice, and to seek freedom. These comments from Hughes echo many of the curricular goals of the *Facing History* curriculum, and many other curricula on the teaching of the Holocaust. They reinforce the notion that simply learning about the historical events of the Holocaust is not enough. Instead, the Holocaust, as a historical occurrence must also spur action, or at least prevention. “Never again,” is a familiar phrase, yet the historical specificity is such that those events will not happen again. Instead, the remainder of the twentieth and twenty-first

¹¹⁷ Representative Hughes (NJ). “1986 Days of Remembrance – Yom Hahsoa,” *Congressional Record* 132(7) (May 6, 1986), H9537.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

centuries saw the occurrence of many acts of genocide. Does this mean that Holocaust education not been successful? Although rhetorical, this question raises concerns about what the specific intent of Holocaust education – whether from a national standard or a particular state one – is to accomplish.

By the mid-1980's, Holocaust education was a viable educational topic across many major cities in the U.S. Many students were beginning to learn of the historical event of the Holocaust, and a myriad of other lessons to be learned from engaging in that scholarship. Although particularly prescient for the state of Illinois, the events in Skokie provided a local example of the need for Holocaust education, while simultaneously injecting the small village into a national discourse on the boundaries of free speech. Early Holocaust curricula typically were found in major population centers along the eastern seaboard, as public schools began to engage in teaching students about the event. Obviously each curriculum contained its own set of unique lessons and goals, these curricula would also help provide the necessary resources to the rest of the country that began to see the Holocaust as a potential historical event ripe for pedagogical picking. The *Facing History and Ourselves* curriculum would go on to become one of the most popular in the nation. Members of the U.S. House of Representatives even began to inquire into the necessity of teaching the Holocaust in U.S. public schools. These debates centered the Holocaust within a U.S. context, espousing not only moral lessons children could learn, but also instill a motivation to action for future generations to prevent genocide. While it certainly is difficult to ascertain what that urgency could be directed toward, it provided a comforting sense to many legislators and educators that students that learned of the Holocaust would be far more fit to make moral judgments and decisions. They would be moved to action. Although the federal government would become a central arbiter of national message regarding

the Holocaust (and would provide curricular materials to that end), it would later be the individual cities, and then states, that determined the particular role that the Holocaust was to play in their public schools.

Chapter Four: From the Classroom to the General Assembly, Holocaust Education in the State of Illinois, 1988-1992

To the present, much – if not all – of the historiography on the development of Holocaust education focuses on a number of events specific to large Jewish populations primarily situated on the eastern seaboard of the U.S. The creation of Holocaust curricula in states such as New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania dominate the focus of scholars seeking to trace the lineage of this particular event as a relevant and necessary piece of various pedagogical goals.¹¹⁹ Paralleling these efforts were the actions of the federal government with the creation of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in the nation’s capital, which was to serve as a central hub of Holocaust education curricula and resources. With the passage of a 1985 California bill, and in 1989 one in the state of Illinois, Holocaust education could be seen as greater than a priority just for local municipalities in the Northeast. When the state of Illinois passed House Bill 003, it mandated the teaching of the Holocaust in the state’s public schools – the first state to do so. Even in the present, there is a considerable lack in understanding as to why these state legislatures were so inclined to mandate the teaching of the Holocaust. While educational mandates were not unique or particularly novel, they did represent a considerable effort on the part of the state legislature to dictate the content of the public school curriculum. These laws demonstrate a reflex in the state legislature to a perceived deficiency in the student population within the state of Illinois specifically, and a desire to produce more democratically aware, morally and ethically upstanding citizens. These mandates also served to delineate the accepted national narrative of the U.S. Holocaust Commission and a broader understanding of which people were considered victims of the Holocaust. Although generally supported, these bills

¹¹⁹ Joseph Berger, “Once Rarely Explored, the Holocaust Gains Momentum as a School Topic,” *New York Times*, 3 October 1988, A16. Other states specifically mentioned that had adopted Holocaust curricula were California, New Jersey, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and Connecticut, in addition to many cities across the country.

served as a battle ground for the boundaries of state control in public education. Opposition was not based on anti-Semitism or a lack of historical knowledge of the events of the Holocaust, but rather on the practical realities of an already strained educational calendar year. While important, many legislators opposed educational laws imposing specific mandates citing an unnecessary reach of legislative authority. Local school districts, opponents argued, should be left to teach their students in the way they best saw fit.

The only text on the development of Holocaust education grounded in a historical methodology is Thomas Fallace's 2008 work, *The Emergence of Holocaust Education in American Schools*.¹²⁰ Others, though, have written on various aspects of the teaching of the Holocaust engaging in a myriad of disciplines including curriculum design, instruction in Christian affiliated schools, use in textbooks, and pedagogical techniques.¹²¹ Most works focus on either undergraduate or K-12 education, but rarely is there distinctions made in separating by

¹²⁰ Thomas D. Fallace, *The Emergence of Holocaust Education in American Schools* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008). In his dissertation, Thomas D. Fallace, "The Construction of the American Holocaust Curriculum," (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2004), serves as one of the few historical accounts of the development of Holocaust education in public schools.

¹²¹ Other studies were meant to ascertain the relative state of Holocaust in the U.S. – arguably not from a historical perspective – particularly the work of Jeffrey A. Ellison, "From One Generation to the Next: A Case Study of Holocaust Education in Illinois," (PhD diss., Florida Atlantic University, 2002). In understanding the treatment of the Holocaust in high school textbooks see, Ellen Heckler, "An Analysis of the Treatment of the Holocaust in Selected American and World History Textbooks" (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 1994) and Leona Kanter, "Forgetting to Remember: Presenting the Holocaust in American College Social Science and History Textbooks," (paper presented to the Department of Education Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminars Abroad Program, October 23, 1998 (Hungary/Poland)). In Christian affiliated schools, see Stephen R. Haynes, *Holocaust Education and the Church-Related College* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997); and Susan Elena Legere, "Change in the Church, Change in the Classroom: Institutionalizing Holocaust Education in American Catholic High Schools," (Master's thesis, Boston College, 2005). For an understanding of implementation see Alison Dobrick, "History at the Gates: How Teacher and School Characteristics relate to Implementation of a State Mandate of Holocaust Education," (PhD diss., Florida Atlantic University, 2008). Others have studied the Holocaust in public schools from various content area objectives including Gustavo David Albear, "A Liberating Intent: The American Civics Curriculum in Illinois High Schools and the Development of a Critically Constructive Citizenry," (PhD diss., Indiana State University, 2011); Simone Schweber, "Teaching history, Teaching morality: Holocaust Education in American Public High Schools," (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1998); James Pecora, "Drama and the Holocaust: A Qualitative Study of Student and Teacher Experience in a High School Social Studies Curriculum," (PhD Diss., New York University, 2006); Joyce Alrene Witt, "A Humanities Approach to the Study of the Holocaust: A Curriculum for Grades 7-12," (PhD diss., Illinois State University, 2000); and Carol Carlberg, "Making Connections Between Transformative Learning and Teaching of the Holocaust in the High School Curriculum," (PhD diss., Saint Louis University, 2008).

age in the study of teaching the Holocaust to a K-12 audience. Generally, high school age students are the primary audience, but other studies of middle school and even some younger age groups exist. These studies seek to understand the impact of Holocaust education within various content areas, as well as within the experiences of the education system. Drawing on the development of Holocaust consciousness in the U.S., and the increasing desire for Holocaust curricula, states began to promote and later mandate the teaching of the Holocaust. The Holocaust, as a historical event, often becomes simply a particular avenue by which to teach several aspects that state legislatures deem appropriate. Students were to be engaged in study of aspects of democratic citizenship, morality, civics, and many others by means of the historical event of the Holocaust.

Although initially Holocaust education was generally created and supported at the local level, national interests were becoming more pronounced in terms of the expectations of the federal government. A 1979 report to President Carter from the President's Commission on the Holocaust listed many educational recommendations to promote study of the Holocaust across the U.S. Chairman Elie Weisel spoke of the necessity to remember and the first recommendation was for the creation of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. The second was the creation of an educational foundation, "dedicated to the pursuit of educational work through grants, extension services, joint projects, research and explorations of issues raised by the Holocaust for all areas of human knowledge and public policy." This foundation would work alongside and foster the development of Holocaust curriculums already available to educators, such as *Facing History* and many others. The Commission's suggested tasks for this foundation were to, "assist with the development of appropriate curricula and resource material," and to work, "cooperatively with those school systems which wish to implement the study of the Holocaust."

The proposed museum was also to serve as a location where educators could exchange ideas, resources, and curricula. The final recommendation regarding K-12 education was that, “the study of the Holocaust become part of the curriculum in every school system in the country,” and in order to aid in this process, “the Foundation should include various support systems, financial aid, evaluation of Holocaust courses presently offered in public and private schools, consortia, conferences, teaching-training workshops, and summer institutes for educators and scholars.”¹²² Also citing the importance of popular media in the role of disseminating knowledge of the Holocaust, prizes and funding for those endeavors were also recommended.

The report continued by demonstrating the need for not only curricula and other resources, but also teacher training, textbook inclusion, and even funding oral history projects of survivor testimony. These efforts were directed specifically toward, “encouraging the introduction of the study of the Holocaust in junior and high schools and universities” including, “the development of resources for such teaching and study.” The Commission was specific to delineate between K-12 and institutions of higher education, and focused primarily upon the educational endeavors in the junior and high school levels. And to that end, the Commission recommended teacher training programs specifically designed to meet the growing demand for Holocaust education. A cited study claimed that, “by 1985, over a thousand school systems will offer specific courses” on the study of the Holocaust. The benefits of study were proffered as well. If teacher training were to be effective, the availability of resources to educators would also prove necessary. In addition to promoting teacher training, the Commission also recommended research on trauma survivors, including the children of trauma survivors. Although mostly speculative, the Commission specifically cited the possibility of using music or other arts as

¹²² President’s Commission on the Holocaust, *Report to the President* (Washington, D.C., 27 September 1979), 24.

cultural representations of the Holocaust.¹²³ These recommendations serve as a strong federal presence in terms of the greater dispersion of Holocaust education throughout the U.S. Materials and resources were to be made available to local school districts that might otherwise be unaware of their existence. Although the President's Commission on the Holocaust cited many recommendations for the greater Holocaust consciousness in the U.S., these specific aspects were among those solely focused upon schools and their role in teaching about the event. Schools were meant to serve the ultimate goal of the Commission – to remember. Chairman Elie Wiesel eloquently noted, “Our remembering is an act of generosity, aimed at saving men and women from apathy to evil, if not from evil itself.”¹²⁴

The focus upon memory was reiterated later in the report, as well. “Americans have a distinct responsibility to remember the Holocaust,” it stated. The reasons were varied, including citizens with “direct family ties with its victims,” the role of the allied military forces in the efforts to liberate the concentration and death camps, and the fact that, “many survivors have since made their homes in this country.” However, the report continued with criticism of the lack of allied involvement – particularly the U.S. – in refugee and rescue operations throughout 1944, leading to the deaths for many of Europe's Jews.¹²⁵ Citing memos from the U.S. Treasury Department to the Department of State, the report placed blame upon the federal government of obfuscating the peril of the European Jewish population and the necessity of military intervention. The concluding comments from Chairman Wiesel demonstrate the natural progression of the Holocaust as a topic of study in the U.S. classroom. The appeal to national integrity is a strong one. He wrote, “In reflecting on the Holocaust, we confront a collapse in

¹²³ Ibid., 24-25.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 5.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 18.

human civilization,” noting the, “causes, processes, and consequences of that collapse.” Upon reflection of the U.S. action – or as the Committee would argue, inaction – there is a necessity to, “study our triumphs as well as our failures so as to defeat radical evil and strengthen our democracy.”¹²⁶ This appeal to democratic values would become a common refrain in the coming years as states began to view the Holocaust as an event that could teach lessons regarding democracy and participatory citizenship. Individual states would then interpret comments such as these to determine their own course of action in applying them within the public education system of various states. California’s bill in 1985 was the first to introduce on a state-wide level the instruction of the Holocaust – albeit without necessarily recognizing the Holocaust as the focal point of study.

The President’s Commission on the Holocaust was quite clear in its assertion that the event was a crime directed specifically toward Jewish individuals, and their efforts were solely to the remembrance of their suffering. State education laws distanced themselves from that narrow understanding of the events of the Holocaust. The California Assembly began by passing Bill number 1273 a, “Model Curriculum for Human Rights and Genocide,” in an effort to teach about the events of the Holocaust in the state schools. This bill set forth a number of tasks to the State Department of Education, as well as the creation of new task forces and amending the Education Code. A far-reaching bill, it demonstrated that the California legislature saw a great deal of educational value in teaching a number of topics through the lens of the Holocaust and other acts of genocide. In addition, the local context demonstrated that it was politically expedient to do so for interested political groups. From its inception, the curriculum was intentionally crafted to engage in the teaching and learning of issues regarding human rights, of which the Holocaust

¹²⁶ Ibid., 20.

was only one component. Implemented in grades 7 to 12, human rights and genocide education was part of the history and social science courses offered in public schools. Although amended in 2004 to focus more specifically on instruction on the Holocaust, the California school code was and continues to promote human rights education throughout the public schools.¹²⁷ In the state of Illinois, legislation was more directly focused on the historical event of the Holocaust and the lessons that it could teach.

By 1988, legislators in the Illinois General Assembly were contemplating the place of the Holocaust in the public education system. Certainly teachers were already engaging in teaching the event throughout much of the state prior to 1988 through the lens of various academic pursuits – but attitudes among legislators were that it was far from adequate. The subsequent legislation was the first of its kind. It became mandatory for each school in the state to teach about the Holocaust. The effort was not without failure. In 1988, Representative Lee Preston sponsored a bill in the Illinois House of Representatives that would mandate, as a requirement for graduation of both elementary and high school, “in the curriculum a unit of instruction and teaching of the events occurring between 1933 and 1945, commonly known as the Holocaust.” The details of this description will be discussed further later, but the mandate of teaching about the Holocaust was the focal point of the bill. House Bill 3011 was opposed not for the content which it mandated, but rather the very fact of the mandate itself. Speaking in opposition, Representative Gene L. Hoffman, from Illinois’ 40th District, spent thirty years as a social studies teacher prior to election into the House. Rep. Hoffman nevertheless opposed the bill with a refrain that would be repeated in the coming years. Although the bill has “laudable aims,” placing more requirements upon teachers was the fundamental opposition to mandatory

¹²⁷ “Beyond our Walls: State Profiles on Holocaust Education, California,” last modified 31 August 2014, <http://www.ushmm.org/educators/beyond-our-walls-state-profiles-on-holocaust-education/california>.

Holocaust education that legislators would voice within the General Assembly.¹²⁸ Rep. Preston claimed that he was “motivated by shock,” at the lack of instruction on the Holocaust and noted that the intent of the law was to ensure “that we don’t forget in coming years the enormity of these atrocities, and the inhumanity man is capable of doing to his fellow man.”¹²⁹

Rep. Hoffman was not the only vocal opponent to House Bill 3011. Also in opposition was Rep. William Black, a Republican from Danville. His opposition echoed that of Rep. Hoffman, with Rep. Black claiming that “schools are already overburdened by legislative mandates and curriculums...required by the General Assembly.”¹³⁰ Rep. Preston argued vehemently about the necessity of the mandate, claiming that studies showed “as many as sixty percent of high school graduates, you should listen to that number, sixty percent of high school graduates have never heard of the name Adolf Hitler, never heard of the Holocaust.” However, legislators were not the only individuals calling for this instruction. Rep. Preston claimed that, “our parents were demanding that our schools do a far better job.” He continued, “It is outrageous where there has been a systematic program of extermination of a people that was so incredibly successful...and yet we have our young people getting out of school and have never heard of the events.” Rep. Preston then specifically listed groups of victims of the Nazis, first mentioning the Jewish victims, but then continuing with political prisoners, the Sinti & Roma, homosexuals, and even those with physical handicaps. Following these comments, Rep. Hoffman again rose to oppose the mandate, stating that, “I’m not talking about the issue, I am talking about mandating and I’m talking about this Legislature adding another mandate, regardless of how laudable the intention may be, on the schools in this State.” With no further

¹²⁸ Illinois House of Representatives, *Transcription Debate*, House Bill 3011, Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 20 May 1988, 121.

¹²⁹ Michael Hirsley, “Giving voice to the Holocaust,” *Chicago Tribune*, 22 April 1990, C1A.

¹³⁰ Daniel Egler and Chad Carlton, “Bill to limit tuitions defeated,” *Chicago Tribune*, 21 April 1988, A3.

commentary, the bill was voted and passed by an 80 to 24 margin. The bill, though, was later voted down, defeated in that calendar year in the Senate. Rep. Preston would not be deterred. Mandatory Holocaust education was re-introduced to the House mere months later, and would not be defeated a second time.¹³¹

Filed with the Office of the Clerk of the Illinois House of Representatives on January 5th, 1989, House Bill 003 sought to amend the school code to mandate that all public schools be required to, “include in their curricula a unit of instruction studying the events of the Nazi atrocities of the 1933-1945 Holocaust period.”¹³² The bill was originally sponsored by three Democratic Representatives of the state, from the north side of Chicago and the surrounding suburbs. Representatives Calvin R. Sutker, Lee S. Preston, and Lou Lang provided the impetus to create this mandate, and as the bill navigated through committees and subcommittees and the General Assembly floor, it grew increasing support from both Democratic and Republican Representatives in the House. Again sponsored by Rep. Preston, Reps. Sutker and Lang signed on as co-sponsors in their efforts to promote and support the bill. Their efforts resulted in the eventual passage of the Holocaust education mandate that took effect on January 1st of 1990. Arguments again were more critical of the role of the state General Assembly in dictating education policy rather than against the subject matter of the Holocaust.

Rep. Preston began serving in April of 1979, Rep. Sutker in 1985, and Rep. Lang in 1987. Rep. Calvin Sutker was raised in the suburbs of Chicago before moving to the city proper during high school in the late 1930’s and early 1940’s. His interest in the Holocaust as an educational endeavor was undoubtedly sparked while on duty with the U.S. Army stationed in

¹³¹ Illinois House of Representatives, *Transcription Debate*, House Bill 3011, Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, May 20, 1988, 124-125.

¹³² Illinois General Assembly, House of Representatives, *Committee History Report* (Springfield, IL), 1.

Europe. By the spring of 1945, Sutker and his battalion had encountered numerous concentration camps, including Dachau. Upon returning to the U.S. following the war, he attained a law degree and practiced law before entering politics in the mid 1960's, and eventually elected state representative from the 56th district. Although Sutker only served three terms, leaving the House shortly after the passage of the Holocaust education mandate, he continued to serve in other political roles throughout the near north suburbs of Chicago.¹³³

Building on nearly a decade of effort in the Illinois House, Representative Preston focused on primary and secondary education, as well as issues regarding housing. Like Rep. Sutker, Rep. Preston received a degree in law, and was legal counsel to the former Lieutenant Governor Neil Hartigan. He had also served as a prosecutor in the city of Chicago, the location of the 11th District. As the most senior representative working on the Holocaust education mandate, Preston's dedication and advocacy toward educational interests lent experience and credibility to the bill. Although Rep. Preston would leave the General Assembly soon after the passage of the mandate, he would later be elected to the Cook County Circuit Court in 1994. Rep. Preston provided not only experiences, but engaged with the media to discuss the necessity of the bill and to generate interest in the public. He was quoted in several publications including the *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, and *Jewish Advocate* reiterating the necessity of the bill. In addition to the general public, Rep. Preston also served to argue the merits of Holocaust education on the House floor of the General Assembly, as well as within the Elementary and Secondary Education Committee. The language Rep. Preston uses indicates an understanding of the place of the Holocaust in a national context, and this particular state bill as an extension of Holocaust memory.

¹³³ Bob Goldsborough, "Calvin R. Sutker, 1923-2013: Cook County Board member, Skokie trustee and Democratic committeeman," *Special to the Chicago Tribune*, 13 May 2013, 1.

The most junior representative sponsoring the bill was elected from the 16th District located primarily in Skokie, the location of the proposed Neo-Nazi march nearly ten years prior. Also an attorney, Rep. Lou Lang's tenure in the Illinois House began in July of 1987. Lang was the only representative that remained in the Illinois House as mandatory Holocaust legislation continued to be adapted and amended over the course of the next several decades. As representative from Skokie, Lang's support of the bill was no accident. Home to the Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois, the suburb was also quoted by the mayor during the attempted Neo-Nazi march that, "victims of the Nazi Holocaust constitute 10 percent of the total population of a community."¹³⁴ Rep. Lang's constituency was one that through several generations represented individuals and their neighbors that were far more knowledgeable on the events of the Holocaust than most other communities in the state. Not only did survivors find residence in the suburb, but the proposed march in 1978 galvanized the community into action. The Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois was created shortly after the proposed march, and members showed their support by participating in the creation of the legislation and then attending and speaking at the House Subcommittee hearing in favor of the mandatory Holocaust bill.¹³⁵

House Bill 003 had a first reading on January 12, 1989 in the Illinois General Assembly. The third of 116 bills that were first read to the gathered Representatives that day was an amendment to the school code. First task on the agenda was the prayer by Father Cassidy, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Following the reading, the bill was then referred to and later assigned to the Elementary and Secondary Education Committee. Debate in the committee occurred on April 11, with the result of a Do Pass, prompting the bill to be continued on the

¹³⁴ Albert J. Smith, "No...", *Chicago Tribune*, 1 January 1978.

¹³⁵ Todd Winer, "Illinois Schools to Teach Shoah," *Jewish Advocate*, 28 September 1989, A18.

assembly line of legislation. Although the resulting vote of the Committee was critical to the ultimate passage of the bill, the inclusion of a fiscal note, filed the same day, ultimately demonstrated the length to which the legislators were willing to go to pass the legislation. The note concluded that the cost to the state would be minimal for two reasons. First, individual school districts would be left to interpret the amount of instruction time devoted to the Holocaust, and ultimately determine to what extent the impact the legislation would have. Second, the Committee determined that the events of the Holocaust were adequately covered within current existing textbooks and that this was satisfactory to complete the State's Social Science Goals for student understanding of those events within the context of World War II.¹³⁶ However, the intent of the General Assembly was clear – should the bill pass, it would be up to the local districts to not only fund, but also determine the specific implementation and time resources to allocate to the mandate.

House Bill 003 then went to the Elementary and Secondary Education Committee for debate. Twenty-four Representatives were in attendance to discuss the merits of the bill. Several individuals were present as witnesses in support or opposition to the bill from a number of organizations across the state. Not all of these organizations were educationally related. Records indicate that ten witnesses appeared at the debate in support or opposition to the bill. Many only appeared as registered lobbyists. Six of the ten witnesses appeared in favor of the bill, while four were opposed. All four witnesses opposed only appeared at the committee hearing, providing neither oral nor written statements to the gathered committee members. The common theme to

¹³⁶ Illinois House of Representatives, *Fiscal Note House Bill 3*, by Robert Leininger, Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 1989. Many have commented on the lack of coverage in textbooks covering controversial subjects such as the Holocaust. One example beyond a scholarly arena was Morris Freedman, "Religion, truth and teaching," *Chicago Tribune*, 27 September 1985, 19. In addition to the Holocaust, Freedman argued that both high school and college textbooks were guilty of, "not mentioning touchy subjects, or of blurring or distorting them, like slavery, Indian treaties, anti-Catholicism, anti-Semitism, the labor movement, the women's movement, the Ku Klux Klan...the exclusion of Asians or the obvious physical differences among many ethnic groups."

the four opponents was that each was a representative of different educational lobbies from across the state. Generally, these lobbies were advocating for the teachers in the state that would ultimately have to implement and teach this mandate. Although providing little in terms of testimony, their appearance demonstrated opposition not necessarily to the bill itself, but to the idea of an educational mandate.

One opponent was Deane Kessler, the Executive Director of SCOPE – the South Cooperative Organization for Public Education. Representing school districts around the suburban south side of Chicago, their goals consist of working with Illinois legislators to monitor as well as develop educational legislation in the best interest of member districts. By working with legislators and the Illinois State Board of Education, SCOPE aimed to develop relationships beneficial to member districts.¹³⁷ Another opponent lobbyist in attendance was Illinois Association of School Boards Assistant Executive Director Wayne Sampson. First created and headquartered in Peoria, the Association currently resides in Springfield, and represents teacher interests in the central region of the state. By advocating broadly for “excellence in local school board governance supporting quality public education,” the group not only lobbies the Illinois General Assembly, but also provides resources and training for public educators.¹³⁸ Although no written or oral testimony was provided by Sampson, records indicate that the impetus for opposition was ultimately concerns over an increase in the number of educational mandates placed upon teachers.¹³⁹ Educational mandates would become a focal point in later years, as well, as arguments mounted regarding the control of teacher creativity.

¹³⁷ “About SCOPE,” last accessed October 2, 2014, <http://scopeforilschools.org/about-scope>.

¹³⁸ “Vision and Mission,” last accessed October 2, 2014, <http://www.iasb.com/whatis/mission.com>.

¹³⁹ Illinois House of Representatives, Elementary and Secondary Education Committee, *Record of Committee Witness*, House Bill 3, Springfield, IL, 1989.

Also appearing in opposition to the bill were Bernice Bloom of ED-RED, an advocacy group for suburban schools in Cook, Lake, and DuPage counties, and Mary Ann Burgeson of LEND, the Legislative Education Network of DuPage County. As with Wayne Sampson and Deane Kessler, Bloom only was in attendance and filed no written or oral statement. ED-RED is an advocacy group based in the Chicago suburbs representing school districts throughout the metro area outside of Chicago proper. Focusing on Education, Research, and Development, ED-RED seeks to analyze and impact educational bills in the Illinois General Assembly. The only other opponent in attendance at the Committee hearing was Mary Ann Burgeson from LEND. Again, only appearing as a registered lobbyist, Burgeson represented suburban districts of Chicago specifically within DuPage County in many similar instances as the previous groups in opposition. By monitoring educational policy legislation, LEND is a group that seeks to advocate on behalf of school districts and teachers by lobbying the Illinois General Assembly. Although more lobbyists were in attendance in favor of the bill rather than opposed, the committee acted to nearly unanimously pass the bill and demonstrated a strong impetus to create educational policy mandating the teaching the Holocaust in the state of Illinois.

The six Committee witnesses present as proponents of House Bill 003 reflected a diverse background of interests in educational policy. While opponents were each representing the interests of schools, school districts, and teachers – proponents were from a wide array of advocacy groups. Speaking on behalf of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois, President Erna Gans provided testimony in favor of the bill. The Skokie-based Foundation grew as a result of the failed Neo-Nazi march through the suburb over a decade prior. The Educational

Director of the Foundation, Professor Leon Stein, also spoke in favor of the bill.¹⁴⁰ In addition to serving on the Board of the Foundation, Stein also served as Professor, and later becoming Professor Emeritus at Roosevelt University in Chicago. In addition to the Holocaust Memorial Foundation, the Jewish Community Relations Council of Metropolitan Chicago also sent a registered lobbyist in support of the bill. These two groups were the only specifically Jewish interest groups lobbying in favor of the bill. Another religiously affiliated group, the Concerned Christian Americans lobby group, based in Springfield, IL, advocating for Christian and tradition values, also provided a witness in attendance, sending lobbyist Nick Stojakovich in support of the bill. The final two lobbyists in support of House Bill 003 were interestingly from educational groups.

In appearance to support House Bill 003, was Vaughn Barber, Director of the Board of Education for the city of Chicago. Also appearing was Oscar Weil, the Legislative Director for the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT). Support from one of the state's largest teacher unions reflected the impetus and desire for the passage of the bill. While some groups opposed the bill, the teacher union support demonstrated that, at least at the union interest level – that Holocaust education was a mandate teachers were willing to accept. The geographic locations of the groups both in support and opposition were also demonstrative of the populations willing to engage in the legislative debate. The majority of witnesses represented groups overwhelmingly based in the Chicago suburbs. Unsurprisingly, many of the groups lobbying hailed from a geographic proximity to Chicago, where a majority of the state's residents reside. Although schools around the state had already been offering courses on the Holocaust, it was groups based around the city

¹⁴⁰ Educational initiatives were already taking place locally focused on the Holocaust in general, and the march on Skokie by the Illinois National Socialist Party in particular. Students in the local area were directed to view the documentary films "Holocaust," and "Skokie," which documented events in the area, as well as the local residents. See Jeff Lyon, "Grabbing the Wheel: Entrepreneur Mike Koldyke looked at American education and didn't like what he saw – so he did something about it," *Chicago Tribune*, 15 May 1988, I12.

of Chicago that offered much in the way of arguments for and against the bill. Although witnesses were close – six proponents, and four opponents, the Elementary and Secondary Education Committee voted much more lopsided in favor of the bill, moving it back to the House for a second reading. The voting did not fall along party lines, either, with both Committee Republicans and Democrats voting strongly in favor of mandatory Holocaust education. Although the four Republicans abstained from voting, the final tally of 17 for, and 3 against easily prevailed resulting in a Do Pass motion, sending the bill back to the House for further consideration.

Although the bill was voted Do Pass by a large majority of the of the members of the Elementary and Secondary Education committee, the debate within the session lasted for half an hour and included commentary from many of the members. Beginning the debate was Rep. Preston, speaking at length to the merits of the mandate, and attempting to clarify the expectations of schools across the state. Rep. Preston noted that while many schools in the state were already teaching about the Holocaust, many were not. While not malicious, the reason for the lack of study was that schools “simply don’t put [teaching the Holocaust] in their curriculum – though most textbooks contain it,” and that, “even in some cases because they don’t even get that far in history study.” After commenting on the fiscal note, Rep. Preston continued and justified the mandate as many have argued before and after that the need is based on memory. There is an obligation to remember, he argued, that it is, “needless to say that one of the greatest dangers that society can make is to forget events that ought not be forgotten... the Holocaust, the events between 1933 and 1945 that took place in Europe must not be forgotten.” He then cited studies throughout the U.S. that claim 60% of high school seniors have not heard the name Adolf Hitler. Rep Preston would make this claim again on the floor of the General Assembly, citing the

study. Then he turned to a familiar refrain – noting a broadcast by Bryant Gumbel, “about the resurgence in Germany of an ultra-right-wing Neo-Nazism.” Calling a lack of knowledge of the events of the Holocaust, “absolutely unacceptable,” He then introduced the first of two speakers in witness as proponents of the mandate. The first was Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois President, Erna Gans.¹⁴¹

Speaking frankly, Erna Gans provided a more thoughtful reasoning for mandatory Holocaust education to the Committee. Focused on several goals, Gans noted that the primary reasoning for the mandate was to, “educate our students to the historical significance,” as well as the, “ethical and moral implications of the significance of genocide and Holocaust.” She hoped, this instruction would “foster intellectual growth,” and to “make a contribution to the continuance of an open and free society, where human rights are respected,” claiming “an educated citizenry will be more inclined to respect the rights of diverse groups in a democratic society.” As well as “to introduce studies of genocide and Holocaust thus contributing to a better understanding of the past of diverse ethnic groups and educating citizens of the future to strive for a better world where these tragedies can never happen again.” However, much of Erna Gans remarks to the Committee were about the willingness of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois to take a leading role in providing curriculum as well as teacher training – even offering to travel to teachers across the state, with no cost to the local school districts. Their curriculum, developed by Dr. Leon Stein, was made freely available to teachers across the state. In addition to developing curriculum and offering teacher training, the Holocaust Memorial Foundation also surveyed Illinois schools to find relevant data on how many schools were teaching about the Holocaust. Although only 11% of 686 school districts responded, 84% of those schools claimed

¹⁴¹ Illinois House Committee on Elementary & Secondary Education, *Debate on House Bill 003*, 86th General Assembly, April 11, 1989.

to have no course on the Holocaust. Fifty-two percent of those that responded claimed an interest in teaching the Holocaust, and Gans argued that, “The data overwhelmingly indicates that there is a need, interest, and desire for Holocaust and genocide studies in Illinois public schools.” To conclude her statement to the Committee, Gans further commented on the rise of neo-Nazism, specifically within the United States – a common statement from those familiar with the events in Skokie. The Memorial Foundation received telephone calls and letters espousing anti-Semitism and outright Holocaust denial. In addition to this correspondence, she also noted the activities of the Institute for Historical Review, which openly espoused Holocaust denial. To combat this rising tide, Gans claimed that education is “the only weapon that we have...To tell the world our story and to educate the people about the truths of history.”¹⁴²

Following Erna Gans was Dr. Leon Stein, also speaking as a proponent for the bill. Although brief, he also helped to design and create a curriculum for teachers to employ in teaching about the Holocaust. Questions were then directed toward Rep. Preston from members of the Committee. The first was Rep. Cowlshaw, Republican from the 41st Illinois District (consisting mostly of Naperville and nearby townships). Her comments were a direct attack on the ideas of educational mandates specifically, and commented that the Spanish Inquisition ought to also be taught as an example of horrific events that humanity has perpetrated. However, her comments regarding complicity are intriguing. Following the comments of people forgetting – comments on memory – she noted that the Spanish Inquisition was “not something that anyone who was responsible for and ought not be proud of” to the extent that, “later some people would have liked to claim that it never happened.” She continued that the world is “full of all kinds of things that ought not to be,” but asserted that it was not up to legislators in Illinois to dictate,

¹⁴² Ibid.

“every single item in every curriculum in ever public school.” In addition to the criticism of the mandate itself, she also noted the precedent that would be set by such a law. If House Bill 003 were to pass, she claimed, it would start a domino effect resulting in “the very next person down the line is going to say ah ha...the Spanish Inquisition was even worse,” which would inevitably lead to a “whole parade of all these things that claim here in Springfield is something that we know better than the local school board.”¹⁴³ While echoing sentiments on the necessity to remember, Rep. Cowlshaw also presented the overall displeasure of several legislators of the Illinois House to support educational mandates. Many of the other comments to Rep. Preston would further question the necessity of a state mandate.

Other members of the committee expressed their own reasoning for voting for the bill. There was a strong understanding that students learning about the Holocaust would become morally upstanding members of society free of bigotry. Representative Grace Mary Stern, Democrat from the 58th district argued that insensitivity, particularly when “the most amusing thing anybody can think of to say...was to tell them a Polish joke or tell them a joke about Helen Keller,” was a considerable problem. Holocaust education, she argued, would help individuals, “come to recognize what sort of ingrown bigotry and prejudice can make in the minds of adults whom knew about the Holocaust, as well as young people.” She described the mandate as of, “urgent importance” as students were not aware of the event, allowing for bigotry abound.¹⁴⁴

The next to speak focused the discussion from the vague generalities of morality and bigotry and instead questioned the communities of study in the mandate. Representative Monique Davis from the 27th district in Chicago inquired about insensitivity shown toward

¹⁴³ Ibid. In addition to Leon Stein, Franklin Littell was also consulted on the development of curriculum in the state of Illinois, see Michael Hirsley, “Religions recall a night of terror,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 November 1988, S9.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

members of the Jewish faith, if it were a motivation for the mandate. Rep. Preston's response continued the separation between the understanding of the Holocaust nationally as a fundamentally Jewish event, and the case in Illinois. He stated that, "the Holocaust applied not to the Jewish community alone. There were as many millions of non-Jewish people who were slaughtered." The mandate was "an attempt to make certain that there is no forgetting of what people – civilized, educated people are capable of doing to one another...and to be cautious about it." This response resonated with Rep. Davis. Drawing on a childhood memory of her father reading about the events of the Holocaust in the newspaper, she began to explain her support of the bill as part of a greater necessity to fight injustice. She argued that the, "educational system has a responsibility to develop within its students the knowledge of past injustices, the reasons for their occurrence, and to develop within them the ability to fight against them whenever they see them."¹⁴⁵ This understanding of Holocaust education as a cure to injustice and bigotry was a continued theme throughout the arguments in the Elementary and Secondary Education Committee as well as the General Assembly debates. However, aside from Rep. Davis, legislators routinely assumed that knowledge of the Holocaust was enough, that this all that was necessary to eradicate hatred and bigotry within the state of Illinois. Rep. Davis' comments encouraging students to fight injustice echo the curricular agenda of the one of the first *Facing History* curricula, which were roundly criticized by scholars.

Concerns regarding funding for the mandate were also addressed. Democrat Bill Edley from Macomb argued that his constituents, although willing to vote for the bill, would ultimately wonder what funding was available to help with training and resources. Rep. Preston responded by reassuring the other members of the committee that "There is zero cost to this in the

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

curriculum” because teachers have already been trained to teach the subject, and curriculum guides had already been developed. Citing the curriculum provided by Dr. Stein and the other members of the Illinois Holocaust Memorial Foundation, Rep. Preston claimed that the mandate was simply enforcing what was already in the state curriculum and schools simply, “don’t get to it.” He continued by expressing that teacher training was unnecessary; the teachers in the state were already properly trained in the subject matter. Instead, he explained the absurdity that the necessity of such a mandate was even a reality, calling it “outrageous that we have to be here passing a law to say teaching something that every school ought to be teaching.” He continued that school districts could “fulfill the mandate as inexpensively as they wish...It’s completely within their discretion.” Although these doubts may have been dissuaded, others continued with their concerns regarding the role of the General Assembly in controlling teachers from Springfield within their own classrooms. Because the bill was vague in its requirements, still others inquired on the expectations of time requirements upon teachers.¹⁴⁶

By defining the lesson on the Holocaust as a “unit of instruction,” Rep. Preston sidestepped much of the criticism toward the control of instructional minutes within Illinois classrooms. However, Democratic Representative Marcel DeJaegher wanted clarification. Specific time requirements were absent regarding how long teachers were to spend in teaching the Holocaust. Rep. DeJaegher offered the suggestion to remove the stigma of the mandate, and instead offer an hour of instruction on the events of the Holocaust. Rep. Preston claimed specifically, “that’s exactly what the bill itself says today...some education, in elementary or in high school...left to the local school board to determine how much or how little [time].” Offering that even ten minutes of instruction would be sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

mandate, Rep. Preston then allowed Dr. Stein to again speak to the committee. The curriculum provided by the Illinois Holocaust Memorial Foundation that he developed was for five days. However, he did note that, “If the teacher would spend one day on it I wouldn’t be as happy but it would be a lot better than nothing.” Following these comments, the vote was called, resulting in a Do Pass majority in favor of the bill to move back to the General Assembly for approval. The Democratic Chairman of the committee, Representative Dick Mulcahey, in opposition of many of his colleagues, uttered, “I have a Do Pass motion on House Bill 003...I’ll be damned. Another mandate. We have 17 voting yes, 3 voting no, and 4 voting present. And in our infinite stupidity the Bill shall be reported out as such.”¹⁴⁷

After a second reading on May 17th, a third and ultimately final reading was scheduled for the next week, on May 25th. A debate regarding the bill was held on the House floor, led by Rep. Preston. It demonstrated many of the vague aspects of the bill, and provided for opponents to express concerns over the lack of specificity. Rep. Preston began by describing the scope of the bill itself, which required a unit of instruction – as defined by the local school boards, “on the events taking place in Europe between 1933 and 1945, commonly known as the period of the Holocaust during the second World War”¹⁴⁸ Individual districts were left to determine the amount of time and resources dedicated to this mandate. The intent of the legislators was to maintain a vague sense of what teachers and their school districts were required.

Rep. Preston continued his argument for mandatory Holocaust education by quoting several unnamed studies which alleged to claim, “that as many as sixty percent of high school

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Illinois House of Representatives, *Transcription Debate*, House Bill 3, Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, May 25, 1989, 286.

graduates have never heard nor can they place the name of Adolph [sic] Hitler.”¹⁴⁹ Not only was this specific to students in the state of Illinois, but to the U.S. in general, Rep. Preston argued. In addition to the lack of student understanding, Rep. Preston cited a disturbing event which occurred at a local church in his home neighborhood. He recounted that a community church which was hosting a meeting on the necessity for racial equality, when, “there was an infiltration by a group of skin heads, neo-Nazis, who went to the meeting, caused a disturbance, fights broke out, the police were called.”¹⁵⁰ Again, the National Socialist Party of America was a justification for Holocaust education. Although not explicitly stated, clearly its continued presence, and even harassment, served to justify to Rep. Preston, and likely others, the educational mandate. Rep. Preston then claimed that this disturbance was not unique but was part of a pattern around other parts of Chicago, as well as the rest of the state. The tone of Rep. Preston’s comments then shifted beyond the local needs of the communities and constituents he represented. He argued that mandatory Holocaust education was beyond a simple requirement of schools. It was in fact, “fundamentally important that we remember that in our lifetimes there were millions, some eleven million people that were systematically slaughtered in Europe.”¹⁵¹ This call for memorialization at the state level represents a desire for those in the General Assembly to maintain a cultural reverence for the events of the Holocaust. The reference to “our lifetimes,” indicates Rep. Preston’s interest in bolstering reverence in future generations, which he claimed was lacking.

Furthermore, Rep. Preston’s comments regarding the eleven million victims deviates from the accepted scholarship on the number of Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Instead, Rep.

¹⁴⁹ Illinois House of Representatives, *Transcription Debate*, 286.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Preston deliberately appealed to a larger audience, noting that there were many other victims beyond those of Jewish decent within the Third Reich. These comments reflect a broader interpretation of the events of the Holocaust focused on more than only the Jews of Europe. This interpretation of the events of the Holocaust served in stark contrast to the national narrative promoted by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council and its efforts in the construction of the national museum in Washington, D.C. Later amendments to House Bill 003 would further distance and challenge the national narrative of the Holocaust, and place schools directly in debate with that accepted narrative.

Following these comments, Rep. Preston began taking questions from other Representatives. The first to speak was Representative Tim Johnson, Republican from Urbana, a district with schools already engaging in teaching the Holocaust.¹⁵² He asked Rep. Preston, “can you tell me one school district...in the entire state of Illinois today, that doesn’t include in its curriculum a more than a passing mention of the events that you make reference to?” Rep. Preston’s response was filled with surprise, commenting that he was, “astonished to learn during the committee hearings that many, many school districts throughout the state do not cover the second World War at all,” and countered Rep. Johnson’s comments claiming that, “some members, frankly who are history teachers on your side of the aisle, were the ones who brought that to my attention.” Rep. Johnson then questioned the specificity of the bill, asking Rep. Preston to clarify that, “your bill requires them to teach about World War II?” Responding that it did call for the teaching of World War II, Rep. Johnson continued to press the point questioning the verbiage of the bill, disagreeing with that analysis. Rep. Preston continued, noting that the

¹⁵² The school district in Champaign was already teaching the Holocaust by this point, and had developed curricular materials that Lucy Dawidowicz reviewed. See Lucy Dawidowicz, “How they Teach the Holocaust,” *Commentary* 90:6 (December, 1990): 31.

bill “requires the teaching of World War II, which would include in it the events that took place in Europe, known as the Holocaust.” Again, Rep. Preston noted the geographic location and chronological period of Europe between 1933 and 1945. Continuing the discussion, Rep. Johnson then directed the conversation beyond the crimes of the Third Reich, asking if the bill would make mandatory “teaching in the schools where the billions of people that were wiped out systematically by Mr. Stalin in Russia?”¹⁵³ Agreeing that the actions of Josef Stalin would be applicable to the time period in questions, Rep. Preston then confirmed that the bill did not engage specifically in the actions of the Soviet Union in general or Stalin in particular.

Rep. Johnson continued by directing the debate back to focus on the role of Adolf Hitler claiming, “it boggles the imagination that a high school student can graduate with a diploma and not...be able to place the name, Adolph [sic] Hitler. Especially, when we have seen in Europe and in this country and in this state, a rise of neo-Nazism.” These continued reminders of the rise of neo-Nazism, as well as the direct references to Adolf Hitler reflect a clear agenda on the part of Rep. Preston. It seems clear that the specific events occurring in Illinois held great motivation and continue to provide evidence and support of the need for this legislation. These events also provide a historical example of the need for Holocaust education. The purpose of the bill implicitly seeks to decrease or even ultimately combat National Socialist agitators operating in the state of Illinois. Rep. Johnson continued to press Rep. Preston on the particular specifics of the bill, asking if it will “address the question of how that subject matter is treated?” Going so far as to question the possibility that, “if you had isolated areas in the state where wrong thinking people were running the school system and treated that period...that twelve year period of history in a light differently than you and I would think it should be treated?” Questioning,

¹⁵³ Illinois House of Representatives, *Transcription Debate*, 286.

“Does your bill tell...you how the school districts have to treat the subject?” The response from Rep. Preston deliberately sidestepped the question, perhaps in assuming political opposition to the bill, but also potentially assuming that this hypothetical suggestion from Rep. Johnson could not exist in the state of Illinois. Rep. Preston responded, “Absolutely not...That’s left to the individual school district to determine how much time that they will spend and what the curriculum will entail.”¹⁵⁴

Following a request from the Speaker of the House to proceed to other questions, more debate came from Representative William Black, from the 104th district. Representative Black represents the House district located in Danville, just east of Champaign. Immediately expressing “reluctant” opposition to the bill, Rep. Black noted a conversation with Rep. Preston, claiming, “I’ve talked with the Sponsor of the bill some time ago and indicated to him that I must...rise in opposition to this bill.” Rep. Black continued, noting that the period itself was worthy of public school attention claiming, “Obviously, what he’s talking about is one of the most hideous chapters in world history and God help us if it ever happens again.” Simultaneously supporting the merits of the bill, Rep. Black then recited a letter from an anonymous school teacher that was sent to him. It read, “I think the Legislature needs to realize before they proceed to further encumber the teacher’s instructional day that time is already pressed.” The second argument posed in the letter was an extension on the time taxation, advocating for basic core subjects. So much time devoted to legislative mandates, the letter claimed, prohibited teachers from instruction on more important subject matter. As other critics also claimed, this teacher then noted that the content was not an issue. “Teaching about the Holocaust is fine, if we can work it into the curriculum.” Repeatedly, critics of the bill felt necessary to not criticize the content, but

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 288.

continued to reduce the number of instruction minutes, “out of the school year and away from basic study.”¹⁵⁵

Calling educational mandates “an infringement on the classroom day,” Rep. Black continued reading from the letter. This teacher returned to the issue of instruction time, arguing that the international standing of student achievement was reason enough to block the mandate. Citing specifically that, “school teachers are constantly being told how much better our Japanese counterparts do at educating the children in their country than we do at educating our kids,” and continued that it was ironic, “that we as educators continue to be given less time to teach subjects like Geography, Math, and Science.” The result of these mandates, the teacher argued was a consistent inferior ranking amongst other nations when measuring student achievement in these “basic core subjects.” The teacher finished the letter with both a reminder of the necessity of teaching “basic subjects” and a curriculum assumption. “Because we teach so many other topics that sometimes we simply can’t work the time in spending teaching the basics that we should be teaching.”¹⁵⁶

No other opponents to the bill spoke. Following a majority vote carried by the 80 ‘ayes,’ over 32 ‘no’s,’ the bill then progressed to the Senate where it was also passed on June 19, 1989. Little debate occurred in the Senate, likely due to strong support from the House where the bill was created. Finally, Governor James Thompson signed the bill on September 6, 1989, which took effect on January 1st, 1990.¹⁵⁷ Although open to a wide breadth of interpretation, Illinois became the first state to mandate that all public schools teach about the events of the Holocaust.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 288-289.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 289.

¹⁵⁷ Todd Winer, “Illinois Schools to Teach Shoah,” *Jewish Advocate*, 28 September 1989, A18. Governor Thompson was quoted as saying that the bill would, “help school children in Illinois learn about the historical significance and the ethical and moral implications of genocide and the Holocaust.”

Other states would follow in the coming years and decades with similar legislation mandates. News of the passage of the bill generated dialogue in the media generally focused around the merits of teaching about the Holocaust and the constraints of teacher instructional time. Opposition to the bill was sparse, but there was at least one incident where parents opted to withhold their child from Holocaust instruction.

Mere months from the effective date of House Bill 3 - now Public Act 86-0780 - parents in the Chicago suburb of Winnetka withheld their thirteen year old daughter out of the Carleton Washburne Middle School. Winnetka is just north of Skokie, the site of the proposed Neo-Nazi march in 1978. Their reasoning for removing their daughter, Safet and Ingeborg Sarich argued that they wanted to avoid what they considered “hate material.” They argued that many of the representations of the Holocaust were “false, with gross exaggerations and distortions.” They also continued by writing and sending letters to five hundred parents, every Washburne and New Trier High school teacher (Washburne fed into New Trier), and to the media. The campaign garnered attention from the Winnetka School Superintendent Donald Monroe, as well as from Rep. Preston. Monroe confirmed that the school had been teaching about the events of the Holocaust for over a decade and had little interest in stopping the practice. Rep. Preston noted that “This letter is the reason the Holocaust education law was needed.”¹⁵⁸ The matter was also mentioned in remarks from Senator Arthur Berman on the Senate floor. When asked to comment by the media, Senator Berman simply noted that he felt sorry for both the children that were withheld from school, as well as for the parents.¹⁵⁹ In response to the campaign, the Simon Wiesenthal Center donated the 1982 Gilbert, Hier, and Schwartzman film, “Genocide,” and a

¹⁵⁸ Gary Wisby, “Parents Keep Child from Holocaust Classes,” *The Chicago Sun-Times*, 25 April 1990, 27.

¹⁵⁹ Illinois Senate, *Transcription Debate*, Remarks – Sen. Berman, Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, April 25, 1990, 13.

poster series to the Washburne School.¹⁶⁰ Although an essentially isolated incident, this letter campaign demonstrated to both legislators and teachers engaged in teaching the Holocaust that there was opposition, and that the mandate had a purpose. Whether or not that purpose was achieved would require time as schools that did not teach the Holocaust began to implement curricula across the state.

The manner of that implementation was certainly diverse as the very text of the bill itself required a broad application for teachers to individually interpret. In order to receive the support of not only the subcommittee but the General Assembly, an unfunded mandate, able to be interpreted in a seemingly infinite number of ways was critical to the bill's success. The onus of implementation was then placed directly onto teachers and local school systems. By not defining what a "unit of study," legislators effectively were able to deflate criticism from teachers on continued eroding of their instructional time. The result was not only a broad and vague educational mandate, but it allowed for any number of local interpretations. Perhaps also relying on private organizations (particularly the Holocaust Memorial Foundation) to provide materials and training, legislators in Illinois felt they had helped to improve the historical understanding and empathy of the state youth without having to actually consider the implementation of such a curriculum. That may seem callous, but it seems that the interest of the General Assembly was to not further dictate to teachers how they should spend their time any further than they already had. A further lack of any kind of oversight further demonstrates a seeming level of trust in state educators to adequately implement the new mandate. Interestingly enough, while the General Assembly considered an erosion of teacher time both in 1989 and 2005, much of the reporting on

¹⁶⁰ "Winnetka School gets Holocaust Film, Posters," *The Chicago Sun-Times*, 4 May 1990, 12. The film provided was Martin Gilbert, Marvin Hier, and Arnold Schwartzman, *Genocide*, directed by Arnold Schwartzman (1982; Beverly Hills, CA; Moriah Films, 1982.), Theatrical. The documentary won the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Award for Best Documentary Feature in 1981.

the Holocaust mandate engaged in the broader discussions concerning what students should be learning.

While a majority of the coverage of the mandate was overwhelmingly positive, several individuals began to address the vague nature of the statute and the ethical questions regarding the subject matter. In one *Chicago Sun-Times* piece, Frank Burgos noted that advocates for the mandate were described as “Concentration camp survivors, Jews and education leaders,” looking to ensure that, “the lessons will keep future generations from repeating the horrors of the past.” What isn’t clear is what those lessons were to be, and to which students they were meant to be directed. The author asks, “How much should 8-year-olds know about it?” Concentration camp survivor Bela Korn who routinely talked to elementary school students, was quoted as saying that, “they should know the Nazis were burning people.” Also quoted in favor of the mandate was Executive Director of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation, Ellyn Harris. In addition to creating curriculum guides for teachers, she also advocated that mandatory Holocaust education was “The only way to combat racism and anti-Semitism.” The ultimate goal was that “it will have an impact so that it’ll never happen again.” Administrators were also quoted as having lukewarm responses to the mandate. One elementary school principal in Chicago echoed earlier opposition to teaching the Holocaust citing that, “We’re really trying to do reading, writing and arithmetic,” and expressed concern over the wisdom of exposing students at the school to the material at such a young age. Korn continued, and noted that even she, “edits out most of the gruesome details of the extermination camps,” in an effort to avoid scaring the younger students.¹⁶¹ This commentary continued as schools began implementing curriculum that engaged

¹⁶¹ Frank Burgos, “Holocaust Confronts Schools – How much Should Kids Learn about Killings?,” *The Chicago Sun-Times*, 24 September 1989, 32.

in teaching the Holocaust, sparking further debate about the logistical realities of the demands placed on the schools in the state of Illinois.

This dialogue was a continuation of the arguments expressed by legislators and lobbyists into the public and specifically the schools around the state. Overwhelmingly, published reactions to the mandate were positive. Many, including some Holocaust survivors, wrote on the necessity of teaching about the Holocaust, and applauded the new mandate. One survivor wrote that, “in most places, the schools provide little help...the Holocaust is taught as a short section in a one-year survey course that supposedly covers the entire history of Western civilization...are not discussed in depth.” In order to increase the level of knowledge of these events, she hoped that “every schoolchild in the United States will benefit from the...educational outreach programs, and will learn that racism and bigotry are not a pose or a casual attitude, but the seed of tragedy and utter destruction.” This mandate would then force people “to have the truth put to them in a way that cannot be evaded” so that the “lessons of the Holocaust will live on.”¹⁶² Additionally, the Winnetka family that had previously withheld their daughter again returned to the press, protesting the mandate. Now used as an example for the necessity of Holocaust education, others used their protests to laud the mandate.¹⁶³

As the first state to mandate the teaching of the Holocaust to children in the state public schools, the Illinois state legislature instigated many discussions that would be had throughout the state in schools, in homes, in the press, and elsewhere. The result would be genuine critique of how to properly enact this mandate, as well as the age-appropriateness for particularly

¹⁶² Fritzie Fritzshall, “The undeniable Holocaust,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 May 1990, N25. In addition to the mandate, Fritzie Fritzshall also participated in an exhibit at the Field Museum in Chicago that was titled, “Remember the Children,” where Holocaust survivors discussed their experiences and answered questions from children. See Eileen Ogintz, “Grim tales the kids should know,” *Chicago Tribune*, 26 January 1990, WC1.

¹⁶³ Allen M. Friedmann, “For mankind,” *Chicago Tribune*, 29 May 1990, N14. See also Lauren Young, “Holocaust teaching,” *Chicago Tribune*, 25 May 1990, N26.

younger aged school children. The bill also began discussions surrounding a politics of recognition and memory. In the following years, the Illinois General Assembly would return to mandatory Holocaust education, amending the law to recognize other groups that have suffered genocide throughout history. In that sense, the narrative in Illinois shifted from the necessity to teach the event of the Holocaust butting up against the opposition to educational mandates and into what events were also worthy of study.

Chapter Five: Society and the School Code: Illinois' Holocaust Education Mandate, 1993-2005

The 1989 legislative mandate sent a clear message to Illinois public school educators – teach the event of the Holocaust. Aside from that directive, essentially no other direction or aid was provided in order to achieve that goal. Instead, administrators, curriculum designers, and teachers were left to create and implement lessons into their instruction. The abstract lessons that legislators hoped students would learn were now to be interpreted locally by those educational agents as they saw fit. Events over the next decade would continue to shape the way in which the Holocaust was taught in Illinois schools. Initially after the bill's passage, many applauded the efforts of educators, lauding the importance of teaching the event of the Holocaust. In the following years other states began to address the event in various ways within their public school systems. A select few mandated teaching it, others created commissions and passed legislation encouraging their public schools to teach the event, and some chose to directly reference teaching the Holocaust in their state learning standards – essentially mandating teaching about the event. Now that schools were engaging teaching the Holocaust in significant numbers, more curricula were designed and offered to educators. The release of director and producer Steven Spielberg's film "Schindler's List" offered new challenges, as well as opportunities for educators in teaching about the Holocaust.¹⁶⁴ Legislators in Illinois would again return to the Holocaust education mandate and amend it, requiring other acts of genocide, be taught as well. This new mandate raised concerns over political recognition in the state by means of the public schools, as ethnic groups around the state lobbied the General Assembly for inclusion in the legislation.

¹⁶⁴ "Schindler's List," directed by Steven Spielberg (1993; Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 2004), DVD. Winner of seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director, few representations of the Holocaust have produced more debate, discussion, and criticism than Spielberg's film. See Michael Wilmington, "Spielberg's Night Holocaust Drama 'Schindler's List' Captures 7 Oscars," *Chicago Tribune*, 22 March 1994, 22.

By 1991, construction of the Holocaust Memorial Museum to be constructed in the nation's capital began. Fundraising efforts across the country were undertaken to aid in construction, and surveys conducted to gain an understanding of national thoughts on the event of the Holocaust. The Chicago metropolitan area led all other metro areas in total donations to the museum, demonstrating a strong commitment within the state. One motivation for the survey grew out of an anxiety that the public had little interest in a Holocaust museum, or particularly in the memory of the event itself. Instead, the survey conducted by Yankelovich Clancy Shulman demonstrated that in addition to a clear interest in the Holocaust, "73 percent of those surveyed and 84 percent of those who know a lot about the Holocaust believe it is essential or very important for Holocaust study to be part of American education."¹⁶⁵

The next year, reports also spoke to the breadth of the mandate. Individuals that spoke on behalf of House Bill 003 in 1989 continued to speak and offer support. Erna Gans and Leon Stein fully committed to their offers of educational materials, Holocaust survivor visits, and teacher training. By early 1992 there was already a waiting list of schools, civic organizations, and churches throughout the state inquiring to hear survivors speak. The Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois sent these speakers across the state. By February of 1992, Stein stated that the Foundation had contacted five hundred teachers across the state. Original creator of the mandate State Representative Lee Preston also called for further regulation on the mandate, asking for monitoring and compliance components to help ensure that all schools were meeting the requirements of the mandate. Despite such calls, Stein was also "confident that the Holocaust is being taught more widely and more effectively than before the law." Chicago Public Schools encouraged teachers to attend training and in-service courses offered by the Foundation, which

¹⁶⁵ Jerome R. Watson, "Chicago leads fund-raising for museum on Holocaust," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 11 January 1991, 34.

included salary incentives. Another institute in Knox County saw approximately one hundred and fifty teachers attend the workshop on teaching the Holocaust. These efforts, while not all-encompassing, greatly spread information on teaching about the Holocaust to both students and educators across the state.¹⁶⁶

Although curricular materials and textbooks were still regarded as insufficient by some, the Illinois State Board of Education reported on the relative scope of Holocaust instruction in the state since the mandate was created almost three years prior. Instruction time ranged from, on average, “at the elementary school level...one week; two weeks at high school.” Lillian Gerstner, the executive director of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation claimed that, “Since the introduction of the mandate, 300,000 children have been exposed to the topic of the Holocaust.”¹⁶⁷ The question then arises how many more students then had instruction on the Holocaust due to the mandate that otherwise wouldn’t have?

As more students became engaged in learning about the Holocaust, the overall goals of the legislators that created the bill were still murky, at best. James Farnham argued that this relatively general intent could be demonstrated in a number of ways. In teaching Holocaust literature to undergraduate students, the results he received were often regarded as future potential and the development of empathy. He argued that “Teaching and studying the Holocaust can stimulate us to imagine the condition of other persons,” fundamentally grounded in morality. The development of empathy “is a moral function, for being able to imagine the effect of one’s contemplated deed on another person is necessary to any moral or ethical judgment one might make of a proposed act.” Based on that understanding on of empathy, Farnham continued that

¹⁶⁶ Michael Hirsley, “Illinois Leading Way in Holocaust Studies,” *Chicago Tribune*, 16 February 1992.

¹⁶⁷ Frank Burgos, “Seminars Attack School Racism – B’nai B’rith to Counsel Libertyville High,” *Chicago Sun Times*, 20 December 1992, 52.

following the end of the course, his students were able to “imagine through Holocaust literature what the victims experienced and what the victimizers thought to accomplish. It seems to me that in this increased awareness there is a potential for making a better world, but it is only a potential.”¹⁶⁸ Although firmly committed to teaching Holocaust literature, Farnham also argued paradoxically that humanity may in any way benefit from learning about the event of the Holocaust. It would seem that this potential for a better world drove much of the reasoning behind mandating the teaching of the Holocaust.

Occurring simultaneously was a national debate; some even consider a war, over the fate of the history curriculum as new standards were introduced in the late 1980’s and into the early 1990’s. Although these new standards were to enhance instruction in K-12 reading, math, and science classrooms; it was the debate over what history teachers that unfolded alongside the development of Holocaust education mandates recommendations and mandates across the country. Ushering in a new era of testing and accountability, progressives focused on multicultural specific content in the history standards, while traditionalists argued for a more celebratory narrative of U.S. history. What ultimately doomed the history standards from ever gaining enough traction to achieve implementation was the response from an outspoken conservative, Lynne Cheney - the former Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Cheney “lambasted the standards as the epitome of left-wing political correctness, because they emphasized the nation’s feelings and paid scant attention to its great men,” wrote one scholar. When interviewed, she argued that the new standards proposed a “warped and distorted version of the American past in which it becomes a story of oppression and failure,” which opened up

¹⁶⁸ James F Farnham, “What is the Value of Teaching the Holocaust?,” *The Journal of General Education* 41 (1992): 22. There is a large body of Psychology literature on the development of morality. For a brief review see Lawrence Kohlberg and Richard H. Hersh, “Moral Development: A Review of the Theory,” *Theory into Practice*, 16 (1977): 53-59.

the debate to the greater public, where the standards received both support and more criticism.¹⁶⁹ Cheney's comments speak to the greater trends in curriculum trends that were at the center of national debate regarding the place of multicultural education in the nation's public schools. Holocaust education certainly fits within that context of increased multicultural education and tolerance; however it very rarely was used as justification for an educational mandate. Instead, legislators, reporters, and other interested parties discussed Holocaust education very specifically (either deliberately or by chance) and did not connect it to the greater trends occurring nationally in curriculum debates. Ultimately, national learning standards for math and reading would move forward, while the history (and also science) standards were left behind, because they were politically caustic. The fallout from these debates impacted the implementation of the Illinois Holocaust mandate and ultimately how it could be monitored and potentially assessed. A lack of national history standards left the Illinois mandate beyond the scope of any federal oversight or standardization. Lack of oversight, even from the Illinois General Assembly continued. The result was a diverse array of experiences for students learning about the Holocaust. Yet, events in 1993 would work to "standardize" Holocaust instruction in some potentially problematic ways.

Years earlier, debates on the nature of the Holocaust and its place within a greater public awareness first began to address representations of the Holocaust and to which populations those representations might be targeted. Nearly a decade before the Illinois mandate, several Holocaust scholars attempted to form an understanding of the use of the Holocaust in various spaces. In struggling to cope with the understanding of Elie Wiesel's novel *The Oath*, Robert McAfee Brown argued that silence was not acceptable. Speaking at Northwestern University with Wiesel,

¹⁶⁹ Diane Ravitch, *Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education* (New York City: Basic Books, 2010), 16-21. For another perspective of these debates over the national history curriculum standards in the early 1990's see also Tom Loveless, "Strengthening the Curriculum," in *What Lies Ahead for America's Children and Their Schools*, edited by Chester E. Finn, Jr., and Richard Sousa, (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 2014), 137-148.

Lucy Dawidowicz, and Dorothy Rabinowitz, Brown claimed that the only moral conclusion to draw from Wiesel's novel was, "we must dare to speak of events our words will seem to trivialize if not distort. We must do so not only so that the dead are not forgotten" but to also to "ensure that such events can never happen again."¹⁷⁰ This argument for the Holocaust – in many forms and contexts, helped to usher the event into greater public awareness. Not only were scholars engaging in the difficult themes, but so too were aspects of popular culture in new ways. Television programs, documentaries, cinematic films and dramatizations, and novels began to gain popularity and inform large groups of the U.S. population beginning in the late 1970's and continuing to the present. The most far-reaching and influential of these was the film "Schindler's List," which ultimately would lead to the creation of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation in 1994.¹⁷¹ These resources would not go unnoticed by educators, and quickly the film was adopted into Holocaust curricula across the country and even globally. Although problematic, Spielberg's film provided another medium and resource by which teachers could engage in teaching about the Holocaust.

"Schindler's List" and the Opening of the USHMM

Many scholars have debated the place of Holocaust memory in the U.S. and its distinct differences from other nations and their own relationship to that memory. Jeffrey Shandler argues that "The Holocaust's singular place in the moral vocabulary of so many Americans is largely a product of the distinctive nature of Holocaust memory culture in this country." The difference, he explains, derives from the differences in how individuals encounter the Holocaust.

¹⁷⁰ Robert McAfee Brown, "The Holocaust as a Problem in Moral Choice," in *Dimensions of the Holocaust: A Series of Lectures Presented at Northwestern University*, ed. Lacey Baldwin Smith (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1977), 48. See Elie Wiesel, *The Oath* (New York City: Schocken Books, 1973).

¹⁷¹ Created by Director Steven Spielberg, the nonprofit organization is now known as the USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education. Conducting tens of thousands of interviews with Holocaust survivors, the archive serves as both a research and education tool that is accessible across the globe via the Internet.

While survivors play a greater role in other nations, in the U.S. “this subject has almost always been mediated through newspapers, magazines, books, theaters, exhibition galleries, concert halls, or radio and television broadcasting.”¹⁷² Television presentations, Schandler continues, are the most overlooked, for a variety of reasons. The greatest reason for “The absence of television in any discussion of memory culture has much to do with a widespread contempt for the medium...many regard television in general as a destructive presence that diminishes or distorts the quality of modern life.” This distortion and destruction occurs through a variety of ways including, “diluting cultural literacy, warping notions of geography and atomizing history, shortening attention spans, promoting conformity of behavior and thought, denying alternative viewpoints a public voice, desensitizing views to violence, and so on.” In this sense, television is viewed as not a vehicle for promoting culture, but rather a detriment to it. Despite these concerns, in order to adequately begin to understand the place of the Holocaust in cultural memory, it is necessary to contextualize how it has been presented in popular culture. As Shandler argues, “Beyond any other medium or forum, television has brought the Holocaust into the thoughts, feelings, words, and actions of millions of Americans. If we want to understand what the Holocaust means for them, we must tune in to television.”¹⁷³

Efforts continued to provide increased sound instruction on the Holocaust. A greater number of curricula were available to educators and the long awaited opening of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. on April 23, 1993 and the release of “Schindler’s List” in November of the same year offered more opportunities for educators. Based on the novel of the same name by Thomas Keneally, the film was released in black and white,

¹⁷² Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), xv-xvi.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

with a running time of well over three hours.¹⁷⁴ Marketed for a mass audience in much the same way the NBC miniseries “Holocaust” had been in 1978, “Schindler’s List” immediately was thrust into discussions regarding the educational aspects of the Holocaust. B’nai B’rith Executive Director Alan Lessack regarded the film as a way to demonstrate “what happened in a period of history only 50 years ago... This is a very important piece of bridging that gap and understanding.” He continued that further action was the ideal outcome of young people viewing the film. In addition he noted that, “If this stimulates people to read more about it, then the movie will have accomplished a great deal.”¹⁷⁵ Others saw the film as a chance for “reeducation” after what had been “unimpressive and ineffective Holocaust education.” What Spielberg accomplished was a “view of the Holocaust more incredible than any I have ever seen before.”¹⁷⁶ These attitudes pervaded the early reactions to the critically acclaimed and ultimately financial success of the film. Not only did the film provide a lens for understanding the past events of the Holocaust, but it was also a medium to understand the present.

“Schindler’s List’s” financial and critical success demonstrated a strong interest in the historical event from a large portion of the population. Comparisons were also immediately drawn by some to the current conditions facing the U.S. In a long form article for the *Washington Post* and *Commentary*, contributing editor of *The Forward* Philip Gourevitch referred to 1993 as the “Year of the Holocaust,” describing the film and museum as “windfalls for the moral education of the nation.” By using the current events unfolding in Bosnia as a lens for understanding how popular culture can influence educational practice, Gourevitch demonstrated the danger in using dramatic films as educational tools for understanding both the

¹⁷⁴ Ana Maria Bahiana, “Reviews: ‘Schindler’s List,’” *Screen International*, 17 December 1993, 20.

¹⁷⁵ Steve Rhodes, “‘Schindler’s List’ Audiences see Modern Message in Film,” *Chicago Tribune*, 16 December 1993, 3.

¹⁷⁶ Jonathon Wasserman, “‘Schindler’s List’: A Holocaust Reeducation,” *Jewish Advocate*, 13 January 1994, 15.

past and the present. After describing the moral ambiguities Spielberg employs in the use of the main character, Oskar Schindler compared to a lack of U.S. intervention in Bosnia. As helpful as films and museums can appear to be in understanding the past, there is also cause for concern. As Gourevitch argued, “It is commonly asserted that anything that increases public awareness of the most extreme moment of the 20th-century history can only be a good thing. But awareness is a vague concept, not always synonymous with knowledge.” It is disingenuous, he continued, “To present as historical fact a morally and historically fictitious creation...corrupts the past in the name of preserving it.”¹⁷⁷ Those concerns, though, would go mostly unheeded by many, including educators and Spielberg himself as he made the film accessible to a wider audience, particularly school-age children. It would not take long before controversy would refocus attention beyond simply as a film and again toward an educational resource.

One incident made national news when teenaged patrons of an Oakland movie theater enraged other attendees by laughing during a showing of “Schindler’s List.” Teachers from local Castlemont High School brought approximately seventy students to the film. After the students were removed from the theater, the teachers were questioned as to the motivation of the students. They said that, “the kids didn’t laugh to be mean, but because they were shocked and didn’t know how to react.” In addition, the school began planning to include Holocaust education into the existing curriculum.¹⁷⁸ Materials for this program were provided by the Jewish Community Relations Council as well as the Holocaust Center of Northern California. In addition to visits by Holocaust survivors, the program would address broader but related topics such as prejudice and racism. Asked to speak at the school, director Steven Spielberg was quoted as saying that

¹⁷⁷ Philip Gourevitch, “Genocide Pop: Between the Holocaust Museum and ‘Schindler’s List,’ the spectacle of mass murder has permeated mass culture. Both tell us far more about present ambiguities than about past truths,” *Washington Post*, 16 January 1994, G1-G6.

¹⁷⁸ “Teens’ Laughter Angers ‘Schindler’s List’ Viewers,” *Chicago Tribune*, 25 January 1994, 3.

Holocaust education was, “of enormous interest to him.” The attention to Holocaust education was further focused by the passage of a bill mandating the teaching of the subject in California social studies classes the year before. Following the incident in the theater, several students composed an apology claiming that, “they weren’t prepared for the film’s content and had little formal instruction on the Holocaust.”¹⁷⁹ The incident would not deter many from employing the film as an educational tool. To the contrary, director Steven Spielberg went to greater lengths to allow his film to be made available to schools as an educational tool.

By the early spring of 1994, third parties, Jewish interest groups, and Holocaust museums began providing “Schindler’s List” to local schools across the country as an educational resource in addition to the efforts of Spielberg. High school students at a few schools in Massachusetts had theater tickets purchased for them by local Holocaust survivors.¹⁸⁰ The following month, Spielberg provided prints of the film to theaters free of charge willing to screen it for high school students in more than forty states.¹⁸¹ By June of 1994, more than a million high school students had viewed “Schindler’s List.” Testifying before a Senate Judiciary subcommittee the same month on the 1990 Hate Crime Statistics Act, Spielberg reiterated the necessity of Holocaust

¹⁷⁹ Charles Levin, “Schindler’s Incident Prompts Broad Educational Effort,” *Jewish Bulletin of Northern California*, 28 January 1994, 3. See also Janet Silver Ghent, “Students Disrupt ‘Schindler’s;’ Leaders Urge Education,” *Jewish Bulletin of Northern California*, 21 January 1994, 7. Others spoke to the profound importance that the Oakland incident provoked, going so far as to claim that Holocaust education was a, “battle in the larger war for the future of American teen-agers.” On one side were sensible adults, attempting to teach children about the dangers of racism and anti-Semitism, and others – such as Khalid Abdul Muhammad, an aid to Louis Farrakhan – that purport to “fill the heads of the desensitized inner-city young with paranoid fantasies.” See Frank Rich, “Schindler’s Dissed,” *New York Times*, 6 February 1994, E17 and Frank Rich, “It’s Hands-on Work to Win Over Hate, Lies,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 February 1994, 31.

¹⁸⁰ Rob Haneison, “Students Learn from Schindler,” *Telegram & Gazette*, 23 March 1994, B6. The Parental Guide from the *Chicago Tribune* went so far as to recommend the film despite its R-rating. Describing the film as, “illuminating for older teens, to whom the word ‘Holocaust’ may be just a term from a history book. ‘Schindler’s List brings the mass scale of Nazi crimes to the screen with crushing urgency,” as well as, “makes us understand the scope of the horrors.” In Tribune Wires, “History Lesson Extraordinary ‘Schindler’s List’ Illuminating for Teen Viewers,” *Chicago Tribune*, 10 February 1994. Illinois Governor Jim Edgar made use of Holocaust Remembrance Day in 1994 to announce the plan to supply all high schools in the state with the film, a copy of the book, as well as other curricular materials. See Illinois Senate, *Transcription Debate*, Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, April 21, 1994, 46-48.

¹⁸¹ “Holocaust Lesson: ‘Schindler’s List’ due for Free Screenings,” *Telegram & Gazette*, 14 April 1994, A12.

education in teaching tolerance. His film could serve as a tool for, “Teaching and discussing empathy as part and parcel of history and current events.”¹⁸² New Jersey governor Christine Todd Whitman provided free showings of the film as part of an Initiative Against Intolerance to students across the state. Pairing “Schindler’s List” with “Roots,” the Initiative was a direct reaction to anti-Semitic comments made by Khalid Muhammad of the Nation of Islam. By viewing both films, supporters argued, “students seeing it rather than wondering why they are being told about the sufferings of the Jews when they are living through their own pain, will instead connect to the Holocaust and understand more immediately the horrible consequences of hatred.”¹⁸³ In South Palm Beach County, Florida, the local chapter of the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith helped to facilitate the viewing of “L’Dor V’Dor - From Generation to Generation,” a documentary as well as the viewing of “Schindler’s List.”¹⁸⁴ In addition to the film itself, Spielberg further requested the Facing History and Ourselves Foundation to develop an accompanying guide and to be made available to every high school in the country.¹⁸⁵

Although widespread, student exposure to the film was not universally accepted. Despite overwhelming success, many critics and scholars referred to “Schindler’s List,” as, “safe, reassuring, and misleading in terms of wider Holocaust history.”¹⁸⁶ Their benefit, though, was that they “played a considerable role in creating awareness of the Holocaust among mainstream film audiences who had known little about it beforehand.”¹⁸⁷ Another scholar expressed his

¹⁸² Associated Press, “Spielberg: Education Holds Key,” *Chicago Tribune*, 29 June 1994, 7.

¹⁸³ Abraham Foxman, “‘Schindler’s List,’ ‘Roots’: A Productive Double Feature,” *Michigan Chronicle*, 8 June 1994, A6.

¹⁸⁴ Marlene Roberts, “‘Schindler’s List’ Project Will Continue in New Form: B’nai B’rith Sponsors ‘L’Dor V’Dor’ to Help Teach about the Holocaust,” *Jewish Journal*, 17 November 1994.

¹⁸⁵ Thomas D. Fallace, *The Emergence of Holocaust Education in American Schools* (New York City: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 114. For specific reaction to this program in the state of Illinois, see Mark N. Hornung, “‘Schindler’s List’ Belongs in Schools,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, 29 April 1994, 41.

¹⁸⁶ Annette Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust, 3rd Edition* (New York City: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 258.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 248.

views on the influence within U.S. cultural memory. Although critical of the film, “whether one likes the film or not, is a strong work of popular culture that has elicited a widespread engagement with the Holocaust, or at least certain aspects of it, in the public cultural discourse in America.”¹⁸⁸ The film’s content, however, was of more concern to parents. Scenes depicting intense violence as well as nudity were problematic for some, while moral reasoning and maturity was necessary for particularly younger viewers. One educator from the Jewish Family and Children’s Services noted that, “A child’s intellect, moral reasoning and abstract ability to not personalize do not develop around age twelve.”¹⁸⁹ Concerns regarding the age of students viewing the film came to a head in Illinois. Johnsbury Junior High School screened the film for eighth grade students that spring of 1994. One parent, JoAnne Neumann, removed her daughter from the classroom. Specifically noting nudity and other “inappropriate” content, Neumann vocalized her objections to the presentation in the media. Prior to showing the film permission slips were sent to parents. School Board President John Heidler lauded the film and the efforts of teachers to engage with it in the classroom. Yet, of the one hundred and seventy students in the school, only two were withheld from the viewing.¹⁹⁰

With the success of the film also came acceptance from some scholars. Although still primarily concerned with issues of “trivialization and popularization,” still at the forefront of critiques on the film, the debate began to shift. Film and Holocaust scholar Judith Doneson referred to this shift in debate as a “coming to terms,” with popular culture representations of the

¹⁸⁸ Alan Mintz, *Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2001), 149.

¹⁸⁹ Sonja Rothkop, “Schindler’s Not a Perfect Lesson on Holocaust, Marinites Say,” *Jewish Bulletin of Northern California*, 10 June 1994, 24.

¹⁹⁰ Patricia Tennison, “Mom Unhappy School Ran ‘Schindler’s List’ 8th Graders are Too Young, She Says,” *Chicago Tribune*, 18 July 1995, 5. In addition to continuing to show the film, Heidler further reinforced the current film policy at the school, arguing that the current policy was sufficient and ultimately had the support of administrators throughout the district. See Donna Santi, “‘Schindler’s List’ Showing Backed,” *Chicago Tribune*, 19 July 1995, 2.

Holocaust. Citing the need for connecting with a greater number of individuals, many Holocaust survivors praised such works as “Holocaust” and “Schindler’s List.” Despite that praise, “Too often however, condemnations of television portrayals such as ‘Holocaust’ ...might be predicated on the wrong criteria.” By comparing comments made by Jeff Greenfield and Primo Levi, Doneson explains that the stylistic approaches to television production may help in an individual’s understanding. “Jeff Greenfield, correspondent for the late-night news program “Nightline,” acknowledged that the simplification of complex issues is essential in television, primarily because of the time limitations sometimes imposed upon a subject.” Doneson compared those comments regarding television with Levi’s comments that “What we commonly mean by ‘understand,’ ...coincides with ‘simplify’: without a profound simplification the world around us would be an infinite, undefined tangle that would defy our ability to orient ourselves and decide upon our actions. In short, we are compelled to reduce the knowable to a schema.”¹⁹¹ Although still flawed, educators saw within “Schindler’s List” a tool for the creation of new schemas concerning the Holocaust. The overwhelming result of the availability and diffusion throughout popular culture of “Schindler’s List” was that for better or worse, it became the de facto Holocaust curriculum not just in Illinois, but the rest of the U.S. as well.

The new national museum would also impact how hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of individuals would encounter the Holocaust. Opening on April 22, 1993, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum located near the National Mall immediately became the major hub for Holocaust educational materials and curricula nationwide. Broadcast across the planet on television, the opening and dedication of the museum was attended by many international

¹⁹¹ Judith E. Doneson, “Holocaust Revisited: A Catalyst for Memory or Trivialization?,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 548 (1996): 71-77.

dignitaries, as well.¹⁹² Prior to opening, a number of concerned reports on the representation were voiced in a number of venues. Many objected to the “Americanization” of the Holocaust, which was a stated goal of one-time deputy director of the President’s Commission on the Holocaust, Michael Berenbaum. For Berenbaum, the idea that “the process by which memory is assimilated by cultures” was not only a desirable, but a stated objective. By avoiding, “dejudaization” of the Holocaust, Berenbaum and the Commission insisted that, “The story would...have to be told in a way that would be meaningful to an American audience; it would have to move beyond the boundaries of ethnic memory.”¹⁹³ Others critiqued the identity cards that visitors were given, which was eventually discontinued, asking, “as if everyone were expected to enter the museum an American and leave, in some fashion, a Jew. Is that what it means to Americanize the Holocaust?” Furthermore, “Perhaps what is most American about the museum is the great optimism behind it, the cheery conviction that even a terrible catastrophe can be put to practical use.”¹⁹⁴ That practical use was not only the museum exhibits and a research institute, but also encouragement to teach the Holocaust and resources for educators and other professionals to accomplish that goal. Although criticized, the Holocaust Museum represented the national direction in emphasizing the teaching and learning of the Holocaust.

After leaving the Museum, Berenbaum continued to be active in promoting the Holocaust, and was appointed the chief executive officer of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, founded by Steven Spielberg. Tasked with recording over 50,000 eyewitness testimony recordings of the Holocaust, he was then to develop ways to promote and make available these recordings to teachers and schools. The Foundation also began to develop

¹⁹² Edward T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America’s Holocaust Museum* (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2001), 1.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 44-45.

¹⁹⁴ Jonathon Rosen, “The Misguided Holocaust Museum,” *The New York Times*, 18 April 1993, E19.

with Facing History and Ourselves videos that would accompany future texts the company was to release. Although valuable, the sheer amount of data was the primary stumbling block for making the testimony available to educators. Indexing and key-word searching of the testimony aided in research of specific topics and ideas. Berenbaum also commented on the specificity to which some schools were contacting the Foundation in creating materials suited to their needs noting that Roman Catholic schools, Orthodox Jewish schools, as well as secular public schools had all expressed interest in materials with particular values that each wanted to see developed.¹⁹⁵ The advancement of technology and the increase in Internet bandwidth provided a far greater access to not only schools, but individuals across the world to view – at least in part – some of the testimony. While extremely valuable, testimony was only a small portion of the total effort to increase the amount of materials and curricula available to educators. Others, including the USHMM would continue to produce materials in that effort.

Despite the criticism, the museum exceeded all expectations on the number of visitors, upwards of 4,000 a day, and 750,000 total seven months after opening.¹⁹⁶ Visitors were asked why they were viewing the exhibits, and many responded seeking lessons of various design. For some, “visiting the museum is a way of guarding against a repeat of the Nazi era,” while others hoped to “learn a moral less from the exhibits.” Still others claimed they were looking for, “a tragic history lesson,” claiming, “If you don’t know history, then you won’t know the future. Something like this could be going on right now.”¹⁹⁷ Speaking at the museum inauguration, President Bill Clinton remarked that, as responsible Americans we are “to learn the lessons, to deepen our memories and our humanity, and to transmit these lessons from generation to

¹⁹⁵ Michael Berenbaum and Mark Goldberg, “An Interview with Michael Berenbaum: The Holocaust and Education,” *The Phi Delta Kappan* 79 (1997): 317-319.

¹⁹⁶ “Holocaust Museum Has Too Many Visitors,” *The New York Times*, 19 November 1993, C3.

¹⁹⁷ Marek Lynne, “Somber Holocaust Museum a Teacher to Thousands,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 13, 1993, 6.

generation."¹⁹⁸ The museum continues that task to this day. Potential lessons that the Holocaust as an educational subject, while not new or particularly unique, were further discussed in schools and state legislatures, but also in the greater public as the Holocaust Museum and “Schindler’s List” put the event further into the consciousness of millions of Americans. Debate continued as to what lessons the event could possibly teach. Holocaust survivors, scholars, and teachers were often quoted for their own opinions on what the event could instill and influence beyond just school children, but adults as well. While most focused on moral questions and issues, Holocaust history was also a priority, especially for scholars and educators.

Lessons of the Holocaust

The notion that the Holocaust can teach a diverse set of lessons to children has been a central component in all arguments for its inclusion in curricula. Many of these lessons stem from the assumption that the Holocaust can be used as a vehicle to develop student morality and moral reasoning. Although there are myriad ways in which to instill and develop morality in students across multiple age groups, often times moral dilemmas are presented to spur thinking in that domain. The guiding principle one scholar on moral education argues is “not to produce right answers or to indoctrinate a content of moral beliefs but to stimulate development of our student’s moral reasoning.”¹⁹⁹ Berenbaum was adamant in his support of the Holocaust as a platform for teaching morality, specifically values education. He argued that, "I think values education - education against racism and against discrimination and toward tolerance and pluralism and decency and human responsibility is the single most important effort in our

¹⁹⁸ Timothy McNulty, “Lessons of Holocaust Survive the Evil,” *Chicago Tribune*, 23 April 1993, 1.

¹⁹⁹ Dennis A. Doris, “Teaching Moral Education; Principles of Instruction,” *Peabody Journal of Education* 56 (1978): 37.

society."²⁰⁰ Citizenship, pluralism, Holocaust history itself were all also valid “lessons” that the Holocaust could teach. Other lessons would also arise, including those driven fundamentally by politics. Speaking at the Days of Remembrance Ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington in 1990, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Jack Kemp argued that “at this moment in history...we must protect and defend what has come to take its place in Jewish and world history, the resurrected Jewish state of Israel.” Not only was this a lesson, but also a way in which to honor victims; “I believe that helping Israel resist tyrants and tyranny and to resist others who would threaten to compromise and weaken the Jewish state, is, the best way to honor the victims of the Holocaust.”²⁰¹ Although not unique, Kemp’s comments demonstrate that the Holocaust was certainly not above politicizing.

Efforts to teach non-traditional students the Holocaust in hopes of developing empathy and to teach acceptance. Teachers attempted to employ the Facing History and Ourselves curriculum in order to help contextualize for these students the prejudice and discrimination that many of them faced. The implementation of the curriculum was a direct refutation of criticism that teaching the Holocaust to children would “disturb” them, and was met with much success.²⁰² In early 1998, Roman Catholic school teachers from the Archdiocese of Washington and Arlington were also invited to a three day seminar on the historical role of the church in anti-Semitism. The seminar, known as the Bearing Witness Program, was soon to become a nationwide set of workshops aimed at training Catholic school teachers in teaching about the Holocaust. The impetus to increase the understanding of church complicity in the Holocaust was

²⁰⁰ Berenbaum & Goldberg, “An Interview with Michael Berenbaum,” 318.

²⁰¹ Jack Kemp, “The Lessons of the Holocaust,” *Jewish Advocate*, 21 January 1990, 8.

²⁰² Judith S. Antonelli, “Lessons of the Holocaust Hit Home with Emotionally Disturbed Children,” *Jewish Advocate*, 8 October, 1987, 6.

an influence of the Second Vatican Council reforms of the 1960's.²⁰³ Many more also wrote on the seemingly endless lessons that the Holocaust could teach. Indeed, few stopped to question the validity, or even the necessity of using the Holocaust as a method for engaging students on a variety of content and moral issues. One, however, was University of Chicago historian Peter Novick, whom wondered what it was that the Holocaust could teach? Or if even the Holocaust could or should teach anything. Instead, he argued, the politics of today shape our understanding of the Holocaust and inform the manner in which people engage with it – from a memory perspective, an educational perspective, or a historical perspective.

In an interview prior to the publication of *The Holocaust in American Life*, Peter Novick asked, “Is current Holocaust remembrance driven by eternal truths of history or social and political needs of 1999?” Novick argued that every American generation “frames the Holocaust, represents the Holocaust, in ways that suit its mood.”²⁰⁴ The manner in which that framing occurred was the central focus of the book itself. These lessons that the Holocaust can teach, Novick argues, tend to be universal. “Individuals from every point on the political compass can find lessons they wish in the Holocaust; it has become a moral and ideological Rorschach test.” And while politically from left and right both groups engage in using the Holocaust as a vehicle for platform specific purposes, much of the public school curricula tend to slant more liberally. Novick continued, “Holocaust curricula, increasingly mandated in public schools, frequently link the Holocaust to much of the liberal agenda, a source of irritation to American right-wingers....”²⁰⁵ Those concerns were often overlooked by teachers and other educators. However,

²⁰³ Fern Shen, “Catholic Educations Get Lessons on the Holocaust: Seminar Examines the History of Antisemitism, the Church’s Role,” *The Washington Post*, 5 February 1998, MD1B.

²⁰⁴ Steve Kloehn, “Historian Opens New Window on Views of Holocaust,” *Chicago Tribune*, 9 April 1999, 8. Novick’s comments were controversial enough to generate letters to the editor in the *Chicago Tribune* prior to publication of the book.

²⁰⁵ Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston, MA: Mariner Books), 12.

as states such as Illinois began to discuss amending their Holocaust legislation laws, an important distinction began to arise. Combined with political necessity, as well as a politics of recognition, more and more ethnic groups lobbied to have other acts of genocide included in mandatory Holocaust education laws. In that sense, the lessons of the Holocaust were again at risk to be de-historicized. Novick described the way in which these lessons were coopted as that they, “hardly seemed to matter whether one was learning the lessons of the Holocaust or the lessons of the Potato Famine, because the lessons were all pretty much the same: tolerance and diversity were good, hate was bad, the overall rubric was ‘man’s inhumanity to man.’”²⁰⁶

Novick, however, was far more critical of the abilities of the Holocaust to inculcate moral reasoning and development. He claimed that the emotional engagement at both Holocaust museums as well as school curriculums was driven by “the conviction that an encounter with the Holocaust, particularly an emotional encounter, is bound to be productive of lessons.” Novick continued, arguing that, “If there are lessons to be extracted from encountering the past, that encounter has to be with the past in all its messiness; they’re not likely to come from an encounter with a past that’s been shaped and shaded so that inspiring lessons will emerge.” This attempt at finding a lesson – something redeeming – from the Holocaust is ultimately, he argues, an American ideal, and unlikely a productive one.²⁰⁷ These concerns were clearly not shared by thousands of educators, legislators, and citizens across the country. The Holocaust would continue to grow in popularity as a topic of study in both K-12 and college students, with more states mandating that the subject be taught. Illinois returned to the mandate in 2005, with the purpose of expanding the mandate to include other acts of genocide. Some groups lobbied the Illinois General Assembly and were ultimately recognized in the newly amended mandate.

²⁰⁶ Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*, 258-259.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 260-263.

Although the concerns of scholars like Peter Novick would not diminish, the growing acceptance of the Holocaust as an important topic for schools to teach further unfolded. Yet, as the scope widened to introduce other acts of genocide, the particularity of the events of the Holocaust could become obfuscated.

Education Legislation in Illinois

While conversations in greater contexts continued regarding all facets of teaching and learning about the Holocaust, members of the Illinois General Assembly continued to not only praise the mandate, but find ways to protect and expand it. Every spring, lawmakers discussed the importance of Holocaust Remembrance Day and went to lengths to promote it on the floor of both the House and Senate. Over the years many legislators spoke on various aspects of Holocaust history.²⁰⁸ In addition, many also lauded the bill on the teaching of the subject, referring to the state as having “taken the lead in teaching the future generations, so that for all times in the future we can say, ‘Never again.’”²⁰⁹ At the same time, there were subtle attempts to curtail the ability of the General Assembly to dictate curriculum. Senate Bill 520 proposed in 1991 brought forth a challenge to the state legislature which ceded some curricular control to local advisory councils composed primarily of parents. Although couched in the language of personal choice for parents of school-age children, some saw the bill as a threat to state mandates and other curriculum standards.²¹⁰ Other legislation attempted to require schools to report on their engagement in teaching not only about the Holocaust, but other curricular mandates, such

²⁰⁸ For example, see Illinois Senate, *Transcription Debate*, Remarks – Sen. Arthur Berman, Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 30 April 1992, 5-7.

²⁰⁹ Illinois Senate, *Transcription Debate*, Remarks – Sen. Carroll, Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, April 11, 1991, 27. Senator Arthur Berman would repeat the same general idea again on 29 April 1993 to the Senate floor, enthusiastically applauding Illinois while also criticizing other states for the lack of a mandate.

²¹⁰ For debate, see Illinois Senate, *Transcription Debate*, Springfield IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 23 May 1991, 95-101.

as women's history and African American history.²¹¹ Even though the measure did not pass, interest in monitoring school adoption of the Holocaust mandate continued.

By the end of the decade, the number of educational mandates further increased, drawing criticism from many in the General Assembly. In addition to the Holocaust, mandates from 1961 including "Leif Erickson Day," and "American Indian Day," and the 1987 inclusion of "Just Say No Day" were joined by new mandates over the 1990's and 2000's. In 2001, the General Assembly added "Arbor and Bird Day," as well as Illinois Law Week. Mandates requiring study of Black History, Women's History, and most recently the Irish Famine were also included in the school code.²¹² Interestingly enough, the Assembly also saw fit to mandate the teaching of the History of the U.S. There are several other mandates focusing on general issues regarding the development of a fully functioning member of society as well – including bus safety, consumer education, conservation of natural resources, avoiding abduction, and parenting, as well as on teaching honesty, kindness, justice, and moral courage. Criticism of these mandates was voiced strongly by Representative William Black, Republican from Danville. A former school teacher, he protested, imploring, "How many of society's problems can we put in the School Code? How many things can we ask our schools to do, and can they do them effectively? And how are they going to coordinate all of the well-intentioned, well-meaning mandates we have put on them?"²¹³ In 2003, a young Senator from the 13th District by the name of Barack Obama heard similar pleas when attempting to introduce a bill mandating the teaching of Asian American history, as

²¹¹ Illinois House of Representatives, *Transcription Debate*, Amendment 2 to House Bill 3066, Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 13 May 1992, 17-24. This particular method of attaching amendments to other bills was employed a number of times in both the House and Senate in hopes of having some sort of reporting apparatus to the General Assembly.

²¹² Technically, the study of the Irish Potato Famine is not "mandated" but is contained within the "permissive" section of the Illinois School code. It is, however, strongly encouraged.

²¹³ Illinois House of Representatives, *Transcription Debate*, Remarks – Rep. William Black, Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 1 March 2000, 219-222.

well.²¹⁴ These criticisms would continue, and provide some context for the debates that came during the first major legislative amendment of the Holocaust mandate. Instead of removing the mandate, though, it was expanded to include other examples of genocide to be studied in Illinois schools.

January 26, 2005, saw the first reading of House Bill 312 – an act to amend the School Code. Introduced by Rep. John Fritchey, a Democrat from Chicago, several co-sponsors were quick to join the bill in the following weeks. Democrats from the Chicago suburbs Rep. Paul Froehlich, and Rep. Lou Lang were added. Then Rep. Harry Osterman, Rep. Mary Flowers, Rep. Marlow Colvin, and Rep. Calvin Giles; all Democrats from Chicago joined as well. House Bill 312 sought to expand the Holocaust mandate to include a second unit of study focusing on other acts of genocide perpetrated abroad. Specifically listed were the Armenian genocide, the Famine-Genocide in Ukraine, and atrocities in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Sudan. Justification for this amendment came in the form of a continued desire to address the fact that genocide has continued to occur throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries. The addition of a second unit of instruction would reinforce student understanding of the Holocaust, and help further teach lessons students in the state were required to understand. After the first reading, but bill was referred to the Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee where it would be debated by the members of the committee, where it also received substantial support from many lobbyists speaking on the bill's behalf.

Debate on House Bill 312 occurred in the subcommittee on February 9, 2005. Several pieces of legislation were scheduled for discussion, resulting in a lengthy meeting at over three

²¹⁴ Illinois Senate, *Transcription Debate*, Senate Bill 890, Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 26 March 2003, 164-167.

hours. Bill sponsor Rep. Fritchey attended the meeting to speak on behalf of the bill, as well as introduce speakers in support. He began by articulating that, “As I started taking a look at that over the summer, it came to my attention upon more study that teaching solely about the Holocaust not only is giving our students an incomplete lesson in World History and current affairs but then does not significantly or does not justifiably put the Holocaust in a significant enough light.” He continued by quickly reciting several genocide statistics, and the number of people killed in each historical event. Using his daughter as an example, he argued that for her to have a more profound understanding of these events, educators need to provide more and more relevant examples, making links to more contemporary events. Rep. Fritchey continued, “Our students need to understand and our society needs to understand that genocide and the teaching of the Holocaust is not a history lesson. It’s a current events lesson.” This was the very notion Novick was critical of. Continuing the theme of lessons that the Holocaust, and now other examples of genocide, can teach, he remarked that, “We need to understand that it means never again, anywhere in this world. Not just ever again to white Europeans.” Because, these events continue to occur with Fritchey asking “why in times of unprecedented media coverage, in times of unprecedented communication still find ourselves repeatedly turning our back to acts of genocide around the world?”²¹⁵ The justification echoed that from 1989, when legislators first argued for the Holocaust mandate. Indeed, he argued that students were receiving an inadequate education on the Holocaust, and this new bill would help rectify that deficiency.

Concluding his opening statements, Fritchey openly discussed the likely opposition to the bill within the subcommittee and the broader Assembly. In anticipation of this criticism, Rep. Fritchey argued, “I would submit to you that this unit of instruction on the Holocaust is already

²¹⁵ Illinois House Committee on Elementary & Secondary Education, *Debate on House Bill 312*, 94th General Assembly, 9 February 2005.

there and I will say with all due sensitivity that teaching part of this picture may in fact be worse than teaching none of the picture at all.” The goal of the new legislation was to “teach the more holistic picture of the underlying issue and the tragedies that give rise not only to these acts of violence but what happens when you have global indifference to that violence.” The chairman of the committee, Rep. Calvin Giles, then recognized each of the individuals that had attended the subcommittee meeting to speak either in opposition, or in support. While there were few opponents, there were far more proponents in attendance to speak to the merits of the bill. The first to give testimony was Len Lieberman, speaking in favor of the bill from the Jewish Federation. He began by expressing his concern that other members of the Jewish community would not be in favor of the amendment. Stating that “a number of Holocaust groups and Holocaust survivors and children of Holocaust survivors would have differences of opinion about whether or not the singularity of the Holocaust should be given up, and talk about other genocides.” These concerns were primarily shared by Elie Wiesel and others that argued the Holocaust was a unique event, located outside of historical understanding. He continued, claiming that, “I was stunned and delighted and amazed to find that virtually every Holocaust survivor and children of survivors are terribly disappointed and hurt when other genocides continue to happen throughout the world.” Again, this call to prevent future genocide was reiterated as a lesson with which the Holocaust and other genocides were capable of teaching.²¹⁶

Quelling the concerns of the local Jewish community was no trivial matter. The issue quickly spilled into the local press, evoking apprehension from not just them, but from the local schools as well. Richard Hirschhaut, Executive Director of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation spoke vehemently on the matter arguing, “The Holocaust – that’s capital-letter-H Holocaust –

²¹⁶ Ibid.

stands as a singularly unique tragedy in the course of human history.” Comments such as these elucidate the sheer animosity that some Jewish groups – even those that were instrumental in the creation of the original mandate – felt toward a possible minimization of the Holocaust in the school curriculum. Adam Schupack, a spokesman for the Anti-Defamation League commented that for the amendment to include other acts of genocide was “worthy,” but ultimately should not come “at the expense of Holocaust education.”²¹⁷ Others argued that it could minimize the Holocaust’s significance, and wanted assure that status would be maintained with the adoption of the new amendment.²¹⁸ Teachers were also drawn into the debate. One suburban Chicago history teacher demonstrated the frustrations of many teachers that face more educational mandates, yet the overall length of the school year does not coincide with the increase in these new mandates.²¹⁹ Although these concerns ultimately proved tenuous, in the overall effort to stymie the amendment, they also spoke to the greater issues impacting public schools and the subject matter they are meant to teach. This context was but a small sample of the opinions which existed as the Secondary and Elementary Education Committee addressed the new amendment.

Mr. Lieberman then continued, reiterating many of the promises made by Erna Gans and the Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois had in 1989, offering curricular materials and other resources to the teachers and students of the state of Illinois. “We will provide speakers. We will provide materials. I am delighted to say to you, and as your sponsor, Mr. Fritchey knows, there are now other groups, and also the Jewish groups, the Anti-Defamation League and others give out materials all the time on the human rights issue of genocide.” Not lacking in

²¹⁷ Ben Fischer, “Some Jewish Groups Wary of Expanded Study of Genocide,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, 25 January 2005, 16. See also Editorials, “Well-Rounded History Lessons Can’t Spare Ugly Truths,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, 26 January 2005, 43.

²¹⁸ Kate N. Grossman, “High School Students, Legislators Open up the Study of Genocide,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, 9 February 2005, 18.

²¹⁹ Grace Aduroja & Erika Slife, “Schools Fear Lawmakers will Cram in More Courses,” *Chicago Tribune*, 8 May 2005, 4C.

materials, Lieberman also assured that “They just have to simply know what’s out there. And we will help teach them what’s out there, so that they can learn about other genocides to teach about them.” He then concluded his comments to the subcommittee by offering his understanding of the importance of learning about the Holocaust and other genocides, noting, “let’s make it blatantly obvious that the significance of the Holocaust is NOT what happened in the ‘30’s and ‘40’s. It’s teaching about human rights so that future genocides do not happen.”²²⁰ This focus on current events and even the future reinforces the arguments for teaching these topics and their potential to prevent future crimes. The lack of specificity in the lesson nonetheless provided unfettered justification for teaching about the Holocaust and other acts of genocide.

In addition to Len Lieberman, the only other lobbyist to speak on behalf of the bill was the Chairperson of the Ukrainian Genocide Famine Foundation USA, Katya Mischenko-Mycyk. Located in Chicago, the group advocates for recognition of the Soviet Union’s forced starvation of millions of ethnic Ukrainians in the Ukrainian Soviet Republic between 1932 and 1933. Representing Ukrainians living within the state of Illinois – the second largest such population in the entire U.S. – and hundreds of who were survivors of the famine genocide. After providing an overview of the events of the Ukrainian famine genocide, Mischenko-Mycyk then began to argue the necessity of the new “unit of study,” and the justification for this particular event as important to the students of Illinois. She argued, “As we educate our children about the injustices of ethnic and cultural hate crimes, it is important to recognize that any form of genocide against any people is equally detestable.” Furthermore, examining more diverse aspects of the state – and even national – culture was also necessary because, “The multicultural nature of the United States of America and the state of Illinois is integral to its cultural and political identity. In such a

²²⁰ Illinois House Committee, *Debate on House Bill 312*, 9 February 2005.

multicultural society, there is no room for showing reverence to one ethnic group, its memory, history, and tragedies, than to another.” She continued, drawing attention to the necessity of studying other cases of genocides, but also arguing that perhaps the Ukrainian famine genocide could teach lessons that the Holocaust could not. “The memory of all groups who have been victims of genocide is agonizing, haunting, and life defining. And each genocide is unique and worthy of study in public schools. There are unique lessons to be learned from each case of genocide which has occurred.” Those lessons, she argued, hopefully would “ensure that Illinois students learn those important lessons, and may come away with a deeper understanding of their fellow man and a tolerance of their fellow man.”²²¹ She concluded her comments in support of the bill, and the subcommittee moved forward.

Only one speaker was in attendance in opposition to the bill. The Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance sent Deanna Sullivan to comment not only on House Bill 312, but also the growing number of educational mandates that the General Assembly had created over the previous years. As a result, a variety of groups began to engage the Assembly in efforts to curb the addition of further mandates. The Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance is a partner of the Illinois Association of School Boards and functions as a liaison between the State Board of Education, the Illinois House and Senate Education Committees, the Governor, and other educational agencies across the state. In addition to the increase in the number of educational mandates, Sullivan commented on the fiscal constraints that the state would face. She specifically noted that, “we believe that we are in a situation this year, especially, with the state looking at a 2.1 billion dollar hole they’re going to have to fill anticipating 325 million dollars in revenue growth to fill that hole.” This fiscal reality, paired with, “a situation where

²²¹ Ibid.

we've had mandate after mandate after mandate passed, and we just think that it's a unit where we need to look very carefully at what we're expecting of schools and what we're able to the fund in the local school districts." That focus on the fiscal situation of the state was further complicated by the increase in other educational mandates, and Sullivan continued, calling for restraint in legislating more of the time of local teachers. She concluded by warning that, "not only are we looking at less funds at the state level, less funds at the local level, and then when we add new programs, as well, I just think it's putting school districts in a very difficult position to try to perform for students."²²² Although Len Lieberman had expressed the willingness of private funding to help offset the cost of the Holocaust (and now other genocides) mandate, the state budget realities, Sullivan argued, complicated matters and unduly placed requirements on the state's public school teachers.

Following Deanna Sullivan's comments, members of the subcommittee began to debate the bill. Representative Jerry Mitchell, a Republican from the 90th District, spoke at length as to his opposition. At first, he misinterpreted the specifics of the mandate, expressing concern for the time required to teach about each of the new acts of genocide that were included. Rep. Fritchey attempted to dissuade his objections, reiterating that, as before, individual schools and districts were to rely on their own discretion in teaching another unit of instruction. The examples provided in the bill were mere suggestions, and not specific requirements of instruction. While the Holocaust still remained specifically mandated, these other examples were suggested, but at least one was to be required. Rep. Fritchey referred to the new bill as simply, "a clarification and enhancement of an existing section of the school code; just to make sure that this curriculum that

²²² Ibid.

is already mandated is taught in a sufficiently comprehensive manner.”²²³ Rep. Mitchell was not satisfied, and wanted further clarification and specification as to the amount of time required by school districts to properly enact this mandate. In response, Rep. Mitchell extolled the virtues of learning about the various acts of genocide and the Holocaust, and certainly topics of import. His ultimate suggestion was to change the venue for learning about these topics from the Illinois public schools, and further emphasized in the state’s institutions of higher education. Learning about the Holocaust and other acts of genocide should be a component of teacher instruction at the state’s universities and colleges, instead of specifically mandated in the public schools.

Rep. Mitchell continued his criticism of the bill, extolling his understanding of the teaching of history. His interpretation of the bill was that it was far too reaching and beyond the scope of the General Assembly to dictate curriculum to the districts. It was also predicated on an understanding teachers should be left to their training – to teach history chronologically. He argued that, “Before long, there’s going to be no room in the curriculum to teach the chronology of history, to teach it the way a history teacher wants to teach it because they have every single thing pointed out, well it’s up to your discretion, but you’ve got to teach this, you’ve got to teach this, you’ve got to teach this.” Not only capable of removing chronological history instruction by potentially teaching the subject thematically, this mandate also, “takes any creativity away from teaching, and that’s a real fear that I have.” Ultimately, Rep. Mitchell argued that, “we’re taking the professionalism out of the entire organization of teachers. That bothers me.” Rep. Fritchey countered by reciting the importance of the topics. The Holocaust and other acts of genocide from the twentieth century, Rep. Fritchey argued, serve as, “simultaneously a history lesson, a social science lesson, and a current events lesson.” In addition, he continued, “Over 20 million

²²³ Ibid.

people have been killed directly through acts of genocide just in the last 80 years,” he continued. Rep. Mitchell responded by pushing the notion that this subject matter ought to be taught at the university level, even going so far as to question why universities were not given curricular mandates by the General Assembly.²²⁴

Representative Suzanne Bassi, Republican from the 54th district and Republican Spokesperson for the Elementary & Secondary Education Subcommittee spoke in agreement with Rep. Mitchell. Also critical of mandates, she articulated a desire to push Rep. Mitchell’s suggestion for requiring universities to teach this content, as opposed to the public schools. Also like Rep. Mitchell, she expressed the noble cause of the bill twice in her comments, but objected to the mandate itself as a drain on an already constrained academic calendar year. A former school teacher, her objections stemmed from constituent teachers that voiced their concerns regarding their ability to cover relevant content in one school year. “Social studies teachers have told me within the past two years that they cannot get beyond World War II because of the number of things we have added to the program that they have to teach.” Instead, she continued that, “it needs to be brought to the higher education department so that our teachers are taught this, so that it isn’t a mandate that is put upon classroom teachers today, but people who are going to be teachers tomorrow incorporate this into where they’re going.” Furthermore, she mentioned the lack of state standardized testing in the social studies due to the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and still there was a lack of time to cover the necessary curriculum components.²²⁵ Those opposed to the new bill expressed their sincerity as to the content of the mandate, but strongly argued that curricular control be left to the individual teachers.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

Voicing similar concerns was Representative Robert Pritchard, Republican from the 70th District. A relatively new member of the General Assembly, Pritchard nonetheless shared in Mitchell's concerns regarding the boundaries of the state legislature to dictate curriculum to teachers. Married to an educator, Pritchard's wife also served as a member of the committee that had helped develop the state learning standards that were recently implemented. Pritchard spoke briefly but expressed significant concern, claiming:

I join in the concern for micro-managing what teachers have to teach... concerned that we're interjecting beyond the scope of those standards things that the students should be able to learn and know, and in fact we may not even be aware of standards that are already covering the sensitivity that you're driving at with this amendment.²²⁶

He continued, adding his support for reviewing the school code and examining the expectations placed on individual teacher's time, as well as the cost to individual districts that Bill 312 and other educational mandates entail. Representative Roger Eddy, Republican from the 109th District, shared the same concerns. The addition of further mandates would inevitably lead to increased financial burden to the districts. He also hinted at the possibility of further expansion to the Holocaust mandate, noting that, "if we become specific to every historical issue, and not that this isn't going to obviously outweigh some of those, we're going to create a curriculum that is absolutely no-doubt going to require additional cost."²²⁷ Rep. Eddy continued, posing a question to Rep. Fritchey regarding the length of the additional unit of instruction. Although still left up to the individual districts to decide, that language continued to be vague enough as to cause confusion for several members of the subcommittee.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

More than twice as many representatives spoke in favor of the bill as in opposition. Representative Rosemary Mulligan, a Republican from the 65th District, managed to segue the debate regarding the bill into a discussion on another related bill which she attempted to pass with little luck. A proponent for gender equality, Rep. Mulligan commented on a bill that was meant to teach equality to public school students, but was ultimately passed to the Higher Education Subcommittee where ultimately the intent of the bill – avoiding teaching gender bias – was implemented in a limited basis at Northern Illinois University. The motivation for the bill was based in Rep. Mulligan’s perception of continued hostility toward women across the world and attempted to rectify that through education. In order to provide Illinois public school students with the necessary skills to compete in a global economy, student’s require instruction on the standing of women as equitable business participants. Rep. Mulligan referred to the lesson that those in favor of teaching the Holocaust often turned – that teaching about gender inequity will help eradicate it. That it will, “help us understand how to prevent them in the future because obviously we’re not preventing them.”²²⁸ Although tangentially related, still other Representatives saw the opportunity to not only support the Holocaust and genocide instruction mandate, but also to reinforce other legislative agendas that were seen as interrelated.

One of the bill’s co-sponsors, Rep. Harry Osterman, a Democrat from the 14th District in Chicago also rose to speak to the necessity of the bill and the specific concerns of his District. His comments were in response to those of Deanna Sullivan regarding the fiscal constraints that the state would see in the coming year. Reiterating the idea that teaching about the Holocaust and other acts of genocide could instill several lessons in Illinois students, Osterman argued vehemently, “There’s no time like the present for some issues. This is an issue that is not just

²²⁸ Ibid.

teaching facts. It's an issue that teaches tolerance to kids in our schools.” He continued by referencing the realities of the populations within the state, noting that “Illinois is home to tens of thousands of refugees. My community, I have 30,000 Bosnian refugees...and the daughters and sons of these refugees are going to school with other Illinois-born residents.” Not only were these issues specifically relevant to the constituents of the 14th District, but they were also a concern for developing culturally sensitive students. Ultimately, Osterman’s concerns, and his support of the bill, hinged upon an understanding of the purpose of the state’s public schools. That the public schools could prepare students for a more diverse state, as well as the realities of working within a diverse global business environment was his principle concern. He argued that, “we are a more diverse state now. We will be a more diverse state 10 years from now. That all the kids in our state understand the issues that are affecting the world, and I think that that’s a better thing and that’s something we should strive for.”²²⁹

Representative Donald Moffitt, Republican from the 74th District, while lauding the bill ultimately expressed concerns over the cost to the local schools. Despite fourteen previous years of the Holocaust mandate, the perception to the subcommittee was that there would be a hidden cost regarding the new bill. He began his comments by expressing the virtues of the bill, and its value in teaching lessons to the state public school students. “There is no doubt that those who will not learn from history will be forced to relive it... Let’s learn from that.” However, as valuable as this mandate was, the cost of implementation was also of consideration. Referring back to Deanna Sullivan’s comments, he noted his concern over the budget shortfall and its impact on the schools ability to meet the demands of the school code. She responded both with comments regarding the budgetary constraints but also the increased time spent devoted to

²²⁹ Ibid.

curricular mandates and how they can interfere with expectations from the state and federal governments regarding implementation of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation. She claimed, “We’re looked at very carefully by the state and federal government, and we are told by virtue of the assessments that we have...what we have to teach and what our students have to perform and doing. And if they don’t perform in those areas, and we’re spending our time on those areas that the state and federal government have decided are important, then we’re sanctioned.”²³⁰ This concern regarding the intrusion on teacher instructional time was shared by several members of the subcommittee. Although it ultimately would not detract from the passage of the bill, it was nevertheless a common theme in the opposition to adding another unit of instruction to the existing mandate.

Still other representatives in the subcommittee were moved to express their support for the bill, and in some cases due to personal interests. Representative Ruth Munson spoke on behalf of Armenian Americans, identifying herself as a member of that ethnic group and urging the importance of that genocide as an example to include in Bill 312. Again, Rep. Munson called for the teaching of the Holocaust and genocide “so that it doesn’t happen again,” and even going so far as to claim that, “the Armenian genocide certainly points to something that could have perhaps stopped a lot of the ongoing or subsequent atrocities that occurred.” Chairman Calvin Giles, Democrat from the 8th District also spoke on behalf of the bill. As a cosponsor, he argued the necessity of the mandate, but also wanted to see the Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee tackle the growing number of mandates within the School Code, and trim them down to a more manageable number. He claimed that, “nevertheless, this one particular legislation is not going to break the...or break something that’s not already broken and it’s a very

²³⁰ Ibid.

important topic.”²³¹ Indeed, while the additional unit of instruction wouldn’t “break” the School Code, representatives in favor of the mandate were beginning to recognize the sheer abundance of mandates that had been added over the course of several years. While the first Holocaust mandate, legislated into law in 1989 received a 17-3 vote in favor by the members of the Elementary and Secondary Education Subcommittee, the vote out of Committee in 2005 was a much more contested vote of 13-8 in favor of the bill. All those voting in opposition were Republicans – however, some of the subcommittee Republican members voted in favor. Throughout the vote process, Reps. Mitchell, Moffitt, Pihos, and Watson again expressed their understanding of the importance of the topic, but their strong opposition was predicated on placing too much control of the classroom into the hands of the General Assembly. Only Rep. Osterman spoke in support of the bill when casting his vote. Although a narrow margin of victory, the bill was then sent back to the General Assembly out of the subcommittee where it would be voted on by all members.

Introduced to the General Assembly by Rep. Fritchey, House Bill 312 received its third reading on March 1, 2005, to members, as well as to individuals in attendance from the Holocaust Memorial Foundation in Skokie. Rep. Fritchey described the necessity of the bill, arguing that, “the issue of genocide is not simply a history lesson. The issue of genocide is unfortunately a current events lesson. Over the last century, over 20 million people have lost their lives in actual genocide in Europe, in Asia, in Africa and it continues as we speak today.” He continued, focusing again on the “lessons” that learning about the Holocaust and genocide can teach to the school children in the state of Illinois. “The lessons to be learned here are that for the words ‘never again’ to truly have meaning it does not simply mean ‘never again’ to

²³¹ Ibid.

Europeans, it means ‘never again’ anywhere in the world and we must teach against not just these atrocities, but the global indifference that they’ve been met by every time.”²³² He concluded his comments by admitting this bill would place more strain on the teachers in the state, but argued that the benefits of such instructions would ultimately vastly outweigh that added burden. Also speaking on behalf of the bill was cosponsor to the original 1989 mandate, Rep. Lang, noting the quality of the bill in not “diluting” the original intention, to teach students about the Holocaust.²³³ Citing the lessons of tolerance, diversity, of humanity, and “understanding our fellow man and standing up against justice,” Rep. Osterman also rose to lend his support to the bill. He continued, recalling that victims of genocide – specifically from Bosnia, Cambodia, and the Sudan – have children and grandchildren throughout Illinois schools. This bill was necessary, in Rep. Osterman’s words because, “it is important for children to understand each other, their classmates, where they come from...this will go a long way towards that end.”²³⁴

Rep. Bassi again voiced her opposition to the bill. While the intent was laudable, she maintained, it nonetheless, “will respectfully have to be voting ‘no’ because it adds an additional mandate. I think this can be incorporated within the social studies program that is already out there.”²³⁵ She listed all of the mandates and other requirements found within the School Code to elucidate her point regarding the amount of instructional time demanded by requirements of the General Assembly. Also speaking in opposition was Rep. Mitchell. Repeating his concerns that

²³² Illinois House of Representatives, *Transcription Debate*, Remarks – Rep. John Fritchey, Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 1 March 2005, 63-64.

²³³ Illinois House of Representatives, *Transcription Debate*, Remarks – Rep. Lou Lang Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 1 March 2005, 64-65.

²³⁴ Illinois House of Representatives, *Transcription Debate*, Remarks – Rep. Harry Osterman Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 1 March 2005, 65-66.

²³⁵ Illinois House of Representatives, *Transcription Debate*, Remarks – Rep. Suzanne Bassi, Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 1 March 2005, 66-67.

were voiced to the subcommittee, Rep. Mitchell continued and agreed with Rep. Bassi's comments. Teachers, with the addition of so many new mandates, would have to leave out other critical aspects of their curriculum – and that process was not one that Rep. Mitchell wanted Illinois teachers to experience.²³⁶ Following Rep. Mitchell's comments the bill was then moved to a vote. 97 voted in favor of the bill, with 11 voting in opposition and 7 members abstaining from the vote. House Bill 312 then moved to the Senate, where on May 11, 2005, again the bill generated considerable debate among the members of the Senate.

The Chief Senate Sponsor for the bill was Jacqueline Collins, Democrat from the 16th District. After introducing the bill, several Senators rose both in support of and in opposition to the bill, articulating many of the same arguments that were voiced within the House. Again, those in opposition to the bill expressed their, “reluctant opposition” – maintaining that, “everyone here in the Body believes that these horrible atrocities that have occurred in recent history are things that our students definitely should know.”²³⁷ Still others, realizing that, “anyone who might vote against it might be accused of not caring, not understanding, all of that sort of stuff,” was a concern for those voting in opposition.²³⁸ Despite that potential, Senator Dave Luechtefeld, a Republican from the 58th District continued, expressing his concerns as a former history teacher. The demands of mandates are simply too much for teachers to adequately address the curricular goals of their textbooks and curricula, while also addressing all of the state mandates, as well.

²³⁶ Illinois House of Representatives, *Transcription Debate*, Remarks – Rep. Jerry Mitchell, Springfield, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 1 March 2005, 67-.

²³⁷ Illinois Senate, *Transcription Debate*, Remarks – Sen. Daniel Cronin, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 11 May 2005, 40.

²³⁸ Illinois Senate, *Transcription Debate*, Remarks – Sen. Dave Luechtefeld, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 11 May 2005, 40-41.

The only other member of the Senate to speak in seeming opposition to the bill was Senator Martin Sandoval, a Democrat from the 11th District. Sen. Sandoval went so far as to say that “we don’t need to go very far – to learn about the reign of terror of governments, ‘cause we’d experience right in our own country.” His comments were unique in his opposition to House Bill 312, and even within the greater context of educational mandates. He articulated an argument specifically condemning U.S. government action against a population – a population that he felt required strong representation. Instead of victims of genocide, Sen. Sandoval referenced the social injustice experienced by undocumented immigrants, specifically those from Mexico, and the subsequent deportations of them, as well as their children whom are sometimes American citizens. He did not stop at deportations, either. The lack of health care to undocumented children was a further act of social injustice and discrimination perpetrated by both the state and federal governments. He argued that members of the Senate needed to “be a little more reflective of what happens in our own backyard, in southern Illinois, in Beardstown, in Alton, in Elgin, in Waukegan, in La Villita, in Cicero, and let’s talk about real...let’s educate our children about real American values like family, God, belief in the American way of life.”²³⁹ Although ultimately offering his support for the bill, Sen. Sandoval’s comments were the solitary critique of state and federal policies specifically from a social justice perspective.

Several Senators spoke at length on their support of the bill as well. Sen. William Haine, a Democrat from the 56th District referenced a radio program claiming a substantial portion of high school and college students couldn’t accurately determine who Adolph Hitler or Joseph Stalin were, an identical claim made prior to the 1989 bill. He also noted the necessity of learning about the Holocaust in order that we do not repeat history. Sen. Carol Ronen, Democrat

²³⁹ Illinois Senate, *Transcription Debate*, Remarks – Sen. Martin Sandoval, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 11 May 2005, 43-44.

from the 7th District repeated those concerns, reiterating that we not repeat history. Sen. Ira Silverstein, a Democrat from the 8th District offered the same, “we say that is in order to have it ‘never again’ is we have to educate, whether it be in the schools or anywhere else, and to educate children about other events that have happened,” repeating, “but ‘never again’ means educating our children.”²⁴⁰ Sen. Collins concluded the discussion on the bill with a personal appeal to those in opposition. Like Sen. Sandoval, he referenced a specific example of the injustice perpetrated by the state and federal governments. He noted that “as a descendant of slaves in America, I think that it is very important for us to be inclusive in our history, and so sometimes that -- that requires us to go back and insert what might have been left out of the history books, because history is usually written by those in power.” Again referencing that “those who do not know history are doomed to repeat it,” Sen. Collins then asked for a favorable vote.²⁴¹ These concerns were raised by Sen. Collins alone. Little discussion was engaged him on the topic of immigration reform and its relative connection to Holocaust and genocide education. The bill was then passed by a margin of 47 Yeas, 5 Nays, and 5 members abstaining from the vote. House Bill 312 was then sent to Governor Rod Blagojevich, who signed it into law on August 5, 2005, effective immediately as Public Act 94-0478.

To the present, no other substantial changes have been incorporated or legislated into the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide educational mandate. Other legislators continued to reference, and propose legislation to amend it further, but ultimately were unsuccessful in those endeavors. By 2005, many other states had either followed suit and legislated their own educational mandates regarding the teaching of the Holocaust or otherwise addressed the teaching of the

²⁴⁰ Illinois Senate, *Transcription Debate*, Remarks – Sen. Ira Silverstein, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 11 May 2005, 42-43.

²⁴¹ Illinois Senate, *Transcription Debate*, Remarks – Sen. Jacqueline Collins, IL, *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, 11 May 2005, 45-46.

Holocaust. New York created a mandate in 1994 that required the state public schools include instruction on, “Subjects of Human Rights Violations, Genocide, Slavery, and the Holocaust.” That same year New Jersey also mandated the teaching of the Holocaust and in 1996 included the topic in the state learning standards. Florida did the same, as well, including the content of the Holocaust in their standards in 2004. In 1998 Connecticut drafted legislation that the State Board of Education would “assist and encourage” the local boards of education to include Holocaust education in their curriculum. Although not technically a mandate, the state learning standards in Connecticut explicitly address teaching the Holocaust in seventh through twelfth grades in the English and Language Arts. In 2003, California developed a mandate, building on several explicit learning standards in the history and social studies curriculum that had existed since 1997 directed at third through twelfth grade students. Much of this legislation contained very similar claims regarding the universal lessons that the Holocaust could teach to the state’s students. The most recent state to mandate instruction on the Holocaust was Indiana after including specific references in their learning standards since 2001, and specifically requiring that instruction by law in 2007. Many of the other states either created State Commissions to otherwise address how their public schools were (or were not) teaching about the Holocaust or included in the state learning standards explicit expectations of student knowledge of the Holocaust and genocide. So many, in fact, that only fifteen states do not in some way recommend, reference in the state learning standards, or explicitly mandate by law to teach about the Holocaust .

This focus on Holocaust instruction represents a strong trend across much of the country to in some way memorialize, remember, or address any number of possible lessons that legislators and state boards of education believe students ought to know. The release of the

massively popular film “Schindler’s List” not only engaged a significant proportion of the public, it also essentially became the de facto curriculum as Director Steven Spielberg made the film widely available and free of charge to high schools across the country. The addition of a second unit of instruction to Illinois the Illinois Holocaust education mandate focusing on another act of genocide demonstrated the desire to look beyond one specific historical event and begin to have students (ideally) understand multiple instances of genocide, and provide them with a vocabulary to begin to compare them. Although often unpopular with many, this addition required more context, especially regarding how genocide has continued to occur, despite pleas for “Never Again.” It also fundamentally focused the instruction on events outside of the U.S. in general, and the state of Illinois specifically. Instead of examining our own historical faults, legislators can point the finger abroad and claim that others were capable of heinous crimes, while lacking an understanding of similar crimes committed within the U.S. The arguments against this mandate also reflect the political difficulty in standing in opposition to the mandate. Routinely legislators applauded the intent, and that the subjects of the Holocaust and genocide were inherently valuable for students to learn, but ultimately the General Assembly should not dictate to teachers in the classroom. The Holocaust education mandate continued to be both a point of pride for many legislators, but also an example of the bloat that continues to be added to the Illinois School Code each year. Instead of reducing the number of mandates, they are continually added, straining teacher instructional time. Despite those objections, the Illinois Holocaust mandate appears as though its continued existence is a certainty into the future.

Chapter Six: Holocaust Education to the Present

With seemingly endless enthusiasm, states have addressed the Holocaust through their systems of public education. Mandates, learning standards, commissions, and other avenues have seen the Holocaust become a common topic taught in much of the United States. The diverse and contextual nature of the U.S. system of public education created significant variances in the manner by which schools engage in teaching the topic. For example, some states include age guidelines, while others do not. Some recommend the topic in history or social studies courses, while others specify English. In Illinois, that process was surveyed in 2006, leaving lawmakers and scholars with a general idea of the resources and pedagogical techniques most often used by teachers, as well as the dissemination of Holocaust education within the state. Despite this level of public engagement, several issues remain. Although more students than ever before have received instruction on the Holocaust, every year cases of Holocaust denial permeate the news media. Inevitably, lawmakers call on the need for *more* Holocaust education to remedy these occurrences. The implementation of these mandates and curricula ultimately leave much of the responsibility to teachers, and their practices are evolving to engage new generations of students further removed from that period of history. While many teachers are successful, many practices have drawn the ire from Holocaust and education scholars alike for a variety of reasons. Holocaust scholars continue to be critical as teachers often provide a brief overview, omitting several key historical points in response to the realities of a limited academic calendar. Education scholars tend to focus on the lack of understanding of cognitively appropriate instruction, as some teachers have taught the Holocaust to some as young as the third grade. Other pedagogical techniques have also received significant criticism for their perceived possibility to trivialize the events of the Holocaust. Though many concerns still remain – some even from the earliest

incarnations of Holocaust education in the late 1970's and early 1980's – the event so permeates popular culture that it will remain a topic of instruction into the future.

Due to the pervasiveness of Holocaust education, pedagogical practices have received increased attention from scholars as to their effectiveness as well as appropriateness. Samuel Totten, professor of genocide at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, has built an entire career on analyzing how schools teach the Holocaust. Over many texts, Totten has demonstrated just how multi-faceted Holocaust education has become. In one volume alone, he and another scholar examine how the Holocaust can be taught through the mediums of History and primary documents, first person accounts, literature for early adolescents, fiction and poetry, film, the Internet, art, drama, and even music.²⁴² This diversity of disciplines is beneficial in that it is demonstrative of the varied practices that educators are employing, but it also requires a far more discerning eye in critiquing the educational goals of these varied educators.

Beyond the goals of educators, the intent of the state General Assembly is also critical in understanding how state legislators have viewed educational mandates as a mechanism for addressing concerns at both a political level, but also on a cultural and moral level. Mandatory Holocaust education demonstrates those concerns and it also raises significant questions regarding the role of public schools in dictating societal and popular norms. As much as popular culture can influence society, the school code represents a significant mechanism by which the state can demonstrate many interests. It seems that since the original Holocaust education

²⁴² Samuel Totten and Stephen Feinberg, editors, *Teaching and Studying the Holocaust* (Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 2001), 1-342. For other examples of teaching the Holocaust within other disciplines see, Samuel Totten, "Teaching the Holocaust in the United States," in *Teaching the Holocaust: Educational Dimensions, Principles and Practice*, ed. Ian Davies (New York City: CONTINUUM, 2000), 93-104; Nicholas McGuinn, "Teaching the Holocaust through English," in *Teaching the Holocaust: Educational Dimensions, Principles and Practice*, ed. Ian Davies (New York City: CONTINUUM, 2000), 119-134; Terry Haydn, "Teaching the Holocaust through History," in *Teaching the Holocaust: Educational Dimensions, Principles and Practice*, ed. Ian Davies (New York City: CONTINUUM, 2000), 135-150; and Sue Foster and Carrie Mercier, "Teaching the Holocaust through Religious Education," in *Teaching the Holocaust: Educational Dimensions, Principles and Practice*, ed. Ian Davies (New York City: CONTINUUM, 2000), 151-162.

mandate in 1989, the manner by which lobbies, citizens, and legislators attempt to impact society through the public schools has only grown. Discussions regarding educational mandates occur quite frequently in the Illinois House, less often in the Senate. Those discussions often occur in the House as many as fifty times a year. Debate regarding the validity of mandates, the inclusion or exclusion of current mandates, taxes to fund various mandates, and many other topics dominate these discussions. A 2011 report noted that since 1992, twenty-two new instructional mandates had been ratified into law by the Illinois General Assembly at approximately one new mandate per year.²⁴³ Emphasis should be noted in that even at the rate of over one new educational mandate per year; they are clearly a viable avenue for addressing any number of political issues. A reliance on this ability to influence the greater public through education seems to be a popular method of redress in a diminishing number of instructional hours in the public schools.

As state budgetary concerns continue to the present, constraints on the ability of public schools in the state of Illinois to address the various educational mandates seems to be an increasingly challenging proposition. As the General Assembly finds fiscal relief in the funding accompanying federal educational policies such as Common Core and the recent Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers assessments (PARCC), test prep places an even greater strain on teacher instructional time. Standardized testing in addition to state mandates provides significant hurdles for current educators in allocating their instructional time. While on the surface this may appear as a competition between federal accountability and state interests, the fiscal realities of the state of Illinois highlight the necessity of federal education

²⁴³ State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch to Governor Pat Quinn, Senate President John J. Cullerton, Senate Minority Leader Christine Radogno, Speaker of the House Michael J. Madigan, and House Minority Leader Tom Cross, June 2011, Office of the State Superintendent, Instructional Mandates Task Force Report.

funding to help maintain the public schools. The result is a diminishing attention to curriculum components not addressed by either the PARCC standards or the state educational mandates and learning standards. Unfortunately and increasingly, if the state has not specifically codified into law the necessity of a particular content area, the result is at least a diminished attention, and at worst elimination from state public schools. From the state level, perhaps mandates can demonstrate a commitment to maintain a set of diverse curricular goals. Ultimately, though, an increase in the number of mandates erodes the ability of professional teachers to dictate their own classrooms. Although financially strong school districts, particularly in the Chicago suburbs, can continue a diverse set of curriculums, urban and rural schools facing budgetary shortfalls will be forced to cut programs for monetary as well as for time considerations to meet federal requirements for assessments.

Beyond the specificity of the individual classroom and the realities of the day to day machinations of a modern public school classroom, a number of issues arise when analyzing how educational mandates impact student learning. In the example of Holocaust education, aside from individual assessments administered by teachers, there are no greater accounts for student understanding of the event. Since the Holocaust specifically, and the social studies in general essentially lack inclusion in state and federal learning assessments, the significant factor in their inclusion in the state curriculum is the fact that they are mandated, either by law or by the state learning standards. It seems that by creating a Holocaust education mandate, legislators were attempting, either in 1989 or 2005, to demonstrate that this one particular historical event held historical value to the citizens of the state of Illinois, but also that it could teach many different lessons to future students. Both broad and specific, those goals seem to be valuable, even to opponents of the Holocaust education mandate. Something intrinsic to the event of the

Holocaust, regardless of whether or not scholars refer to it as a “unique” event in world history or not, speaks to a greater trend in not just Illinois, but the greater popular culture in the U.S. In many ways the Holocaust has become intrinsically linked to a popular understanding of twentieth century U.S. history that people broadly identify with and feel a sense of pride from. While avoiding the negative aspects of the Holocaust, the narrative regarding it may just as much about finding the positive aspects of U.S. involvement. While not stated, it seems that this trend was certainly an undercurrent in creating the Holocaust education mandate in the state of Illinois.

In the most practical of cases, it is up to individual teachers to interpret the intention of the General Assembly into their own instruction, perhaps even at the behest of their professional training. For those teachers uninterested in the subject matter it may seem creatively stifling to individual creativity. In the case of teachers already engaged in pedagogy and interest, the mandate is essentially unnecessary. For both, the Holocaust undoubtedly allows for an examination of one of the most perverse acts of humanity. In that perversity, it can often become difficult to juggle the realities of an instructional day with the weight of one of the most traumatic events in human history as a topic for discussion. However, the necessity to ground that greater existential understanding into a historical context becomes all the more important for student comprehension. While seemingly controversial, an anchor in grounding that understanding can often be found in examining comparative genocide in relation to the Holocaust and other historical occurrences of genocide. Proffering a curriculum that includes not just the Holocaust, but aspects of comparative genocide provides for greater engagement with individual student schemas. While all historical events are intrinsically unique, the Holocaust maintains a place within U.S. popular culture that begs for a description of “unique.” Whether justified or not, by studying the Holocaust in isolation or as part of comparative genocide

regardless will in many ways maintain that unique aspect, possibly even strengthening that understanding.

The “State” of Holocaust Education in Illinois Schools

Several scholars have attempted to evaluate the “state” of Holocaust education in recent years. Those efforts have resulted in similarly broad arguments about how the Holocaust is taught in various contexts across the country. One scholar, James Ellison, describes the quality of instruction as a function of the individual teacher’s “Holocaust profile,” arguing that those teachers with a personal interest in teaching about the Holocaust fit a specific profile in which they often exert extra effort in providing meaningful instruction to students.²⁴⁴ Thomas Fallace argues that the two most prominent Holocaust education forces remain the Facing History and Ourselves Foundation and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Although they often have had conflicting recommendations on proper instruction, the two produce the vast majority of source material for teachers of the Holocaust. He continued, noting that instruction on the Holocaust tended to be the most popular in two significant populations: suburbs with a significant Jewish population and urban schools with high non-white student populations. The final point, Fallace claims, is that the main resources used to teach the majority of middle and high school students about the Holocaust are Elie Wiesel’s *Night*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and “Schindler’s List.” Describing efforts toward Holocaust education as “ambitious,” Fallace concluded by claiming that even though the U.S. Holocaust Museum and Facing History are the two greatest of resources, even highly regarded teachers still tend to focus on these three resources.²⁴⁵ Although

²⁴⁴ Jeffrey A. Ellison, “From One Generation to the Next: A Case Study of Holocaust Education in Illinois,” (ED diss., Florida Atlantic University, 2002). Within the text of the dissertation data, Ellison included personal correspondence with Leon Stein, Roosevelt University professor and Holocaust education advocate mentioned in previous chapters. Stein surveyed local suburban teachers and received very few responses, but the few responses ultimately were in line with the greater trends that Ellison and Prispia would outline in their 2006 study.

²⁴⁵ Thomas D. Fallace, *The Emergence of Holocaust Education in American Schools* (New York City: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 155-157. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum remains a symbol of national Holocaust

previous efforts to ascertain the state of Holocaust education in the state of Illinois were not granted by the General Assembly, Ellison continued his research and set to surveying the state's public school teachers regarding their perceptions of implementations of the mandate.

Published in 2006, Jeffrey Ellison and John Pisapia concluded the most expansive study of Holocaust education practices ever conducted. In order to determine whether schools within the state of Illinois were compliant with the state educational mandate regarding Holocaust and genocide instruction, Ellison and Pisapia examined several key questions, including the who, what, when, why, and how of the content that is taught. Another focus of the study was to ascertain why certain schools engaged more in the practice than others. Responses from 219 Illinois high schools assured a relatively strong sample size for their survey findings. The religious affiliation of the teachers was surveyed, resulting in the vast majority reporting Protestant denominations (53%), and Catholic (33%), with only 5% of teachers of the Holocaust identifying as Jewish. An overwhelming majority of teachers were aware of the educational mandate and demonstrated considerable opinions in that regard. Sixty-one percent of teachers surveyed favored the mandate and 88% felt that they were adequately prepared to teach about the Holocaust. Teachers also felt overwhelmingly (82%) that their school was in compliance with the educational mandate.²⁴⁶ These perceptions were representative of a fairly strong understanding and compliance of the Holocaust educational mandate and how the state legislators envisioned its practical implementation. Although these general reactions demonstrate how teachers perceived their own place within the educational system, the results regarding the

memory. In the summer of 2009, it was the site of a shooting of a security guard by an 88 year old gunman with a history of anti-Semitic commentary. Holocaust museums across the country were put on alert as a result of the incident. See "Hate Shooting," *Chicago Tribune*, 11 January 2009, 3.

²⁴⁶ Jeffrey Ellison and John Pisapia, "The State of Holocaust Education in Illinois," *IDEA* 11 (2006): 4-6.

subject matter itself reveal several key tendencies in how the mandate is implemented in Illinois schools.

Next, teachers responded to the academic course in which the Holocaust was taught. The subject was primarily taught in American History courses (89%), and then World History (55%), followed by A.P. American History (26.2%) and a smattering of other history and literature courses comprising no more than 15% of courses. Ellison and Pisapia next surveyed the prominent themes most often taught. In over 99% of courses, the death camps, Hitler's rise to power, the concentration camps, and the Auschwitz camp specifically were included as topics of instruction. Several other topics that occurred in over 90% of courses on the Holocaust were propaganda, anti-Semitism, prejudice, the history of Germany following World War I, the Final Solution, the Ghettos, *Mein Kampf*, and stereotyping. These topics, while important, also reveal specificity to the kind of instruction in practice throughout the state. Teaching the Holocaust in American history primarily situates the event within the U.S. context – Americanizing it. Primarily, these topics focus on events between 1944 and 1945, the window for U.S. involvement in liberating the camps of Western Europe. Other topics that receive far less attention also demonstrate the continued existence of the concerns of Holocaust scholars and the shortcomings of Holocaust educators. For example, the history of Anti-Semitism in relation to the Catholic and Protestant churches appears only tangentially – with 54% of courses including references to the Church's response to the Holocaust, and 50% including instruction on Martin Luther.²⁴⁷ These findings reinforce the critiques that scholars have levied against Holocaust education in the decades prior, but also demonstrate the profoundly U.S. perspective in teaching and learning about the Holocaust. The next battery of survey questions further reinforced the teaching methods employed, and the resources most often consulted.

²⁴⁷ Ellison and Pisapia, "The State of Holocaust Education," 7-8.

The resources most often implemented by teachers were then surveyed. Seventy-one percent of teachers responded that they primarily relied upon Spielberg's, "Schindler's List," while only 65% engaged students with the course textbook. Unsurprisingly, the next most popular texts were *The Diary of Anne Frank* (43%) and Weisel's *Night* (39%). Curriculum guides further demonstrate the popularity of the major providers, as well. Teachers responded that approximately 32% employing the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum curriculum, 21% the "Survivors of the Shoah" curriculum, and 20% teaching the Facing History and Ourselves model. With these curriculum and resources in mind, teachers were then queried as to their own perceptions on why they were teaching the Holocaust. The underlying theme of their responses again returns to the narrative of lessons that the event can teach. Indeed, over 90% of respondents referred to nine lessons emphasizing the importance of teaching the Holocaust. First and foremost, teachers wanted students to understand the how and why, followed closely by several tangential concepts. An aversion to stereotyping and discrimination rated highly; as did encouraging critical thinking, understanding human capacity for evil, discourage involvement in hate crimes, individuality in altering outcomes, and a refrain that has occurred over and over – preventing such an event from occurring again. The final two responses from over 90% of teachers demonstrate more of the same issues with Holocaust instruction in the U.S. The first was an encouragement of student understanding of democracy as opposed to authoritarian rule – assuming this authoritarian rule was placed in the context of Nazi Germany, and not a contemporary example. The second response, offered by 92% of teachers, was to encourage students to contextualize student understanding of the Holocaust in relation to U.S. history. These responses raise a number of interesting results, and Ellison and Pisapia provide some meaningful reactions to their survey data.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 8-11.

As to the typical Holocaust educator, they were often white, practicing some Christian denomination, had received degrees in history, and were relatively new to the profession teaching ten years or less or had been teaching for more than twenty-one years.²⁴⁹ This profile of a typical Holocaust educator shared similar results with a study conducted by Evelyn Holt in the state of Indiana.²⁵⁰ Most Illinois students received instruction on the Holocaust as juniors in high school U.S. history courses – a mandatory course for graduation. Only 50% of teachers responded that students received instruction in World history courses. That distinction is an important one, as it further reinforces the notion that the Holocaust is a fundamentally American event, tied indelibly to its national history. Although these results may indicate space/time issues within individual school curriculums, the overwhelming majority of the responses demonstrate that teachers have ultimately decided that the Holocaust should be addressed within the context of U.S. history. Ellison and Pisapia described this relationship as, one of the “problematic areas in Holocaust education: American history is not the natural home for the Holocaust. America’s role in the Holocaust was secondary, not primary.” Rather, they suggest that European or even World history would be a more appropriate venue for the topic. Instead, the lack of U.S. actions in limiting the Holocaust would be far more appropriate for the subject of U.S. history. Another alarming conclusion the authors reached was the danger of teaching both the Holocaust and slavery – “America’s most pernicious institution” – together in the same academic year. Ultimately, they conclude that, “teachers risk minimizing the evils of slavery, and at the same time trivializing the Holocaust. In short, they risk doing an injustice to both subjects.” The

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 12.

²⁵⁰ Evelyn R. Holt, “Implementation of Indiana’s Resolution on Holocaust Education by Selected Language Arts and Social Studies Teachers in Middle Schools/Junior High Schools,” (PhD diss., Indiana State University, 2001), 69-70.

greatest concerns of the authors were these critiques to the teaching of the Holocaust in U.S. history courses.²⁵¹

Despite concerns regarding the curricular location of the Holocaust in U.S. history classrooms, Ellison and Pisapia were less critical of the lack of variety in the materials that teachers routinely cited in their use. In terms of texts, *Night* and the *Diary of Anne Frank* were cited most frequently, along with the course textbook. In terms of film, there was little surprise that “Schindler’s List,” was largely cited as the most common classroom resource. They did warn, however, that these specific resources can lead to “Americanizing” the Holocaust. Specifying Donald Schwartz’s conception of Americanization of the Holocaust, they described the result of this process as, “The negative and dangerous impact is softened by treating the Holocaust like a made-for television movie; it is given a happy ending. Emphasis is no longer placed up on the unimaginable horror and piles of corpses but rather on the more positive aspects of the Holocaust, such as the heroes and rescuers.” Beyond these resources alone, the authors also emphasize events such as the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, overall Nazi resistance, as well as the creation of the nation of Israel as “positive” topics that emphasize a narrative of overcoming adversity. This skewed perspective of the historical realities harken back to the concerns of scholars decades prior, worried about how the Holocaust would be taught. The solution, Ellison and Pisapia argue, is to properly contextualize both the film and the texts, to point out historical flaws. Only then can a more robust understanding of the Holocaust as a historical event be demonstrated. As they conclude, “The desire to find some good in the Holocaust, for teacher and student alike, cannot be allowed to distort the overwhelming darkness of the Holocaust’s

²⁵¹ Ellison and Pisapia, “The State of Holocaust Education,” 13-14.

historiography. That is, the intense desire to find something good in the Holocaust might reveal more about our needs than about the Holocaust.”²⁵²

The final three findings drawn from the survey data speak to further issues that continue to remain as a result of a relatively vague Holocaust education mandate. The first, regards the various lessons that teachers seek to enlighten their students, which are often quite varied. Despite the mandate, teachers routinely indicated that the mandate itself was not the primary reason for teaching the Holocaust. Instead, citing earlier concerns from Henry Friedlander, Samuel Totten, and others regarding the unclear rationale for teaching the Holocaust, Ellison and Pisapia noted several responses. They noted that this lack of clarity in what lessons the Holocaust could teach was problematic in that “teachers experienced in teaching the Holocaust, the multitude of reasons ... might be viewed as an opportunity; for less experienced teachers, the multitude of reasons could be viewed as confounding.” Although this concern was nearly entirely overlooked as the educational mandate bills navigated the Illinois General Assembly, it nevertheless raises significant issues in terms of the final findings of the authors. The second finding was that the vast majority of schools comply with the mandate. Because a “unit of instruction” bears little meaning in terms of specificity of instructional time or other parameters, schools perceive their efforts as conforming to the law. The final finding was in regards to the very notion of the mandate itself. The mandate could have been rewritten to better elucidate the intent of the legislators. Although the intent may be unclear, the primary concern of the authors was the lack of funding for the mandate, arguing that teacher training likely far outweighed the benefits of state mandates. As Ellison and Pisapia note, because no study of the state of Holocaust education prior to the mandate exists, it is difficult to ascertain just what and how

²⁵² Ibid., 15-17. See Donald Schwartz, “‘Who Will Tell Them after We’re Gone?’ Reflections on Teaching the Holocaust,” *The History Teacher* 23 (1990): 95-110.

effectively the mandate has impacted the state's youth. What is certain, however, is that despite the Illinois mandate and a further emphasis on teaching the Holocaust across the country, current events indicate that the very actions it was meant to deter still occur with considerable frequency.²⁵³

A nationwide study was conducted the year prior that employed a survey methodology to determine the prevalence to which high school teachers were teaching the Holocaust, and what they determined the content which those students learned. 327 teachers responded, approximately 30% of those surveyed. Although nowhere as extensive as the Ellison and Pisapia study of Illinois, it does reflect many similar trends nationwide. Approximately 72% of English and social studies teachers that responded to the survey in some way taught about the Holocaust in the 2003-2004 academic year. Unlike Illinois, teachers more often appropriated more instructional time and were more likely to teach the Holocaust in English courses as opposed to the social studies. Teachers similarly responded in potential lessons that could be construed. Promoting tolerance, understanding and recognizing prejudice and stereotypes, and preventing future cases of genocide were all common responses. Teachers were also polled regarding the context in which they examined the Holocaust. The most common perspectives were human rights at nearly 90%, followed by American history at 56%. More interestingly though, was the resources teachers employed in teaching about the Holocaust. The most common response, at nearly 70%, was films. Also surprising, was the vast majority of responding teachers – 85% of teachers accounted for their knowledge on the Holocaust as derived from informal learning outside of college or other school coursework, professional development, or other possible

²⁵³ Ibid., 18-19.

venues for learning about the event.²⁵⁴ As the dominant mode of learning – informal – many teachers across the country potentially rely on aspects of popular culture not only for their own understanding, but also as resources to teach about the Holocaust to their students.

Holocaust Denial

Whether based on speculation or a perceived threat, more attention was drawn to the seedier aspects of the Holocaust – namely Holocaust denial and its place in U.S. popular culture. Despite Illinois' educational mandate, the opening of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the release of, "Schindler's List," members of the Jewish press expressed concern that as popular as Holocaust memory was in the U.S., Holocaust denial was growing as prominent, as well. Utilizing new technologies such as the Internet, the Institute for Historical Review was able to publish its *Journal of Historical Review*, which focused on aspects of Holocaust revisionist history and denial. In 1994, "60 Minutes," a popular television program on airing CBS also featured segments on revisionism, drawing national attention to the phenomenon.²⁵⁵ Citing the attention Holocaust deniers received from both the popular press and from scholars, one account attributed the rise in Holocaust denial to this attention.²⁵⁶ Other venues took a different interpretation, opting to look at new productions in film and text as possible responses to Holocaust denial, and placing them within that context. Whether that was the intent of the content creator or not, their work was placed within the context of growing anti-Semitism and

²⁵⁴ Mary Beth Donnelly, "Educating Students about the Holocaust: A Survey of Teaching Practices," *Social Education* 70 (2006): 51-59. Interesting to note is that despite nearly thirty years of difference, the same rationale for teaching the Holocaust continue. As early efforts in New York City and other cities first began teaching the Holocaust, their logic remains consistent to the present. See Louise Matteoni, "Why Teach the Holocaust?," *Journal of Jewish Education* 49 (1981): 4-7.

²⁵⁵ 60 Minutes, "Who Says it Never Happened?," 20 March 1994.

²⁵⁶ Ain Stewart, "The Bright Shining Lie: Despite the New U.S. Holocaust Museum and 'Schindler's List,' the Holocaust Denial Movement is more Visible than Ever. How Dangerous is it?," *The New York Jewish Week*, 14 April 1994, 24.

Holocaust denial. One *Chicago Tribune* piece referred to the efforts of Steven Spielberg and other Holocaust scholars work as diligent, but also claimed, “there are others working just as fervently to convince people that it never happened.”²⁵⁷ This attention undoubtedly spurred Holocaust deniers onto the periphery of U.S. popular consciousness.

Released in 1994, perhaps the most thorough scholarly account of Holocaust denial in the U.S. was penned by Deborah Lipstadt. In *Denying the Holocaust*, Lipstadt demonstrates a thorough account of the growth and development of Holocaust denial from its first antecedents. Ironically, she argues, by the early 1990’s, the most common terrain for traction in Holocaust denial was occurring on college campuses. Spurred by the publicity mentioned previously, Holocaust deniers relied on “creative tactics and assisted by a fuzzy kind of reasoning often evident in academic circles.”²⁵⁸ Lipstadt’s prescient concerns regarding Holocaust denial in 1994 should nonetheless remain into the future. As she argues, the aspects of Holocaust denial that permeated college campuses in the early 1990’s ultimately led to conclusion that “It was naïve to believe that the ‘light of day’ can dispel lies, especially when they play on familiar stereotypes.” She continued, noting that, “Light is barely an antidote when people are unable...to differentiate between reasoned arguments and blatant falsehoods.” Instead of placing Holocaust denial into the proper context, it instead engendered itself to an argument that featured Holocaust “revisionists” against established historians. The assumption that there could be a debate enabled far more agency for Holocaust denial than before.²⁵⁹ Lipstadt concludes her text with a call for vigilance. Responses to Holocaust denial, she claims, must be strongly and diligently directed

²⁵⁷ Daniel Liebenson, “Proof Positive Historical Footage Records the Legacy and the Lessons of the Holocaust,” *Chicago Tribune*, 27 January 1997, 3.

²⁵⁸ Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York City: Penguin Group, 1994), 183. Canada faces similar issues. In, Raphael Cohen-Almagor, “Hate in the Classroom: Free Expression, Holocaust Denial, and Liberal Education,” *American Journal of Education* 114 (2008): 217, notes that three of the most notorious and well-known Holocaust deniers were all teachers.

²⁵⁹ Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust*, 207-208.

toward Holocaust denial for what it espouses – historical fabrication. The growth of Holocaust education can in some ways be an optimistic view of that continued diligence. It can also be seen as a reaction to the Holocaust denial that continues into the present.

Two thousand and nine also saw the re-opening of Illinois' own Holocaust museum, the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center, located in Skokie. The small suburb was the center of a free speech battle detailed earlier that wound its way through the nation's courts. Although the group of neo-Nazis ultimately never marched through the town, that legacy remained in the narrative espoused in the local media with the opening of the museum. "The seeds of the museum were sown more than 30 years ago, when members of the Nazi Party of America sought to march in Skokie," one account read. Many of the survivors living in Skokie argued that "despite their desire to leave the past behind, they could no longer remain silent." The mission of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois, which operates the museum, remains, "combating hate with education."²⁶⁰ While the new museum is the visible symbol of those efforts, the Holocaust education mandate is the result of the practical efforts to impact education. Other accounts return referred to the "lessons" that were on display in the museum, including a censored display for younger children that "conveys lessons of standing up to oppressors ('bullies') and speaking out against injustice." The connection to the Holocaust mandate was also explicitly referenced, as the museum provided a "teaching trunk" which contained several artifacts, books, and other resources that were to be made available to educators around the state as a sort of mobile display.²⁶¹ In addition to serving as a central hub of Holocaust education information and resources, the Illinois museum nevertheless provide the primary means by which state legislators believe they can combat Holocaust denial. The museum

²⁶⁰ Geoffrey R. Stone, "How Nazis Helped Build Holocaust Museum," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 25 April 2009, 16.

²⁶¹ Mike Thomas, "The Legacy – The Illinois Holocaust Museum, which Opens Sunday, is Dedicated to Victims and Survivors, but it bears Heartbreaking Witness to Evil," *Chicago Sun-Times*, 19 April 2009, A14.

and the mandate were partially created as a response to combating anti-Semitism and bigotry, but also a firm belief in the possibilities of education.

Cognitive Development and the Teaching of the Holocaust

Despite more attention to Holocaust denial, educational aims began to grow more diverse in terms of offerings. In many instances, educators stepped beyond the specific requirements of their curriculum and began addressing both new pedagogical techniques, as well as engaging students beyond U.S. history or even Language Arts classes. Some even went so far as to argue that, “teachers are increasingly incorporating lessons on the Holocaust in their English, mathematics, history and social studies courses at all levels.”²⁶² Unsurprisingly, this expansion of Holocaust education into these diverse content areas has resulted in questionable pedagogical techniques and educational resources. *In Making Sense of the Holocaust*, Simone Schweber details the efforts of four teachers in their pursuit of teaching. One teacher in particular, referred to as Ms. Bess, employed a Holocaust simulation in the classroom. Beginning the discussion with a list of both personal and scholarly concerns, Schweber nevertheless recognizes several issues in utilizing simulations in teaching the Holocaust. Citing research that concluded that, “classroom simulations, as representations of the Holocaust, inevitably pervert Holocaust history, since the form of a simulation warps its historical referent. By treating tragic subject matter as a game, by making it fun for students to learn, by leavening the heavy history of this era, one compromises or diminishes the seriousness of the events themselves.”²⁶³ Although

²⁶² Mary J. Gallant and Harriet Hartman, “Holocaust Education for the New Millennium: Assessing our Progress,” *The Journal of Holocaust Education* 10 (2001): 5.

²⁶³ Simone A. Schweber, *Making Sense of the Holocaust: Lessons from Classroom Practice* (New York City: Teachers College Press, 2004), 61. Another study of different teaching techniques can be found in Robert A. Waterson, “The Examination of Pedagogical Approaches to Teaching Controversial Public Issues: Explicitly the Teaching of the Holocaust and Comparative Genocide,” (PhD diss., Purdue University, 2007). For a response to Schweber from the context of informing student teachers, see Nurith Ben-Bassat, “Identifying with Horror:

Schweber considered the efforts of this single teacher's use of simulations to be relatively successful in terms of student learning, the concerns largely remain for educators in using these types of pedagogical techniques to teach the Holocaust.

Although this sort of experimentation is necessary for educators to determine best practice in tandem with educational research, another trend has also left both educators and scholars without definitive guidelines for teaching the Holocaust. State policies often only vaguely reference grade level when dictating learning standards or in mandates. In many cases, teachers refer to their own initiative in determining the "appropriate" age for students to begin to learn about the Holocaust. Efforts to teach the Holocaust to particularly elementary age children have often received criticism, but a lack of definitive direction as to the age where students have achieved enough cognitive development to learn about the Holocaust is lacking. Perhaps the foremost opponent of teaching the Holocaust to younger children is Samuel Totten, who vociferously argues that students from Kindergarten through the fourth grade lack the necessary mental acumen to adequately engage in learning. He argues that, "To even attempt to teach...in a way that is understandable to a five-, six-, seven- or eight-year-old would be folly." Describing the "real" story of the Holocaust to such a population, "would constitute miseducation." Totten raises four questions that stem from the debate regarding the age appropriateness to teach the

Teaching about the Holocaust - A Response to Simone Schweber's 'Simulating Survival,'" *Curriculum Inquiry* 22 (2003): 189-198. Schweber's account was hardly the first attempt at using simulations to teach about the Holocaust. Thomas Fallace recounts one of the first simulation exercises - referred to as a game - known as "Gestapo" that was first published in 1976 by Rabbi Raymond Zwerin and Aubrey Friedman Marcus. This game remains an educational resource in use by teachers in the U.S. Although specifically denounced by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in their "Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust," offers a particularly Jewish account, and tends to focus primarily on the unique experiences of Jews. For other examples of simulations, see Thomas D. Fallace, "Playing Holocaust: The Origins of the Gestapo Simulation Game," *Teachers College Record* 109 (2007): 2642-2665. While the Gestapo Simulation Game was perhaps the most popular educational simulation, others developed games - board games - around a similar premise. The *Wall Street Journal* profiled Art and Design professor Brenda Brathwaite. See Jamin Brophy-Warren, "The Board Game No One Wants to Play More Than Once," *The Wall Street Journal*, 24 June 2009, accessed 12 June 2011, <http://blogs.wsj.com/speakeasy/2009/06/24/can-you-make-a-board-game-about-the-holocaust-meet-train/>. For more guidelines regarding best practices, see Berman Center for Research & Evaluation in Jewish Education, "Best Practices in Holocaust Education: Report to the San Francisco Jewish Community Endowment Fund," October 2006.

Holocaust. The first, asks what is the purpose of teaching it to young children? The second constitutes concerns regarding the authenticity of such instruction: is it even possible for the Holocaust to be taught to young children? Related, he further asks, is what these young students taught really the Holocaust? And finally, what does advocacy for instructing on students this young take us into the future? Totten's conclusions are fairly straight forward. He argues that, "it is imperative that teachers and schools meet the children at their developmental level, challenge them, and not abuse them. It is as simple and profound as that."²⁶⁴

Although a relatively new development, some educational research has begun to examine the realities of this instruction on young children. Beginning with Totten's general questions and concerns, Simone Schweber investigated one third grade classroom where a teacher implemented a lesson on the Holocaust. Although arriving at the same conclusions as Totten, Schweber nevertheless argued that a topic as complex as the Holocaust could be taught to third grades. In the specific case she investigated, the students were able to begin to grapple with those events. She argues that we should not teach the Holocaust to third graders. Although some students were able to begin to comprehend the material more in-depth, those who could not comprehend, "didn't understand and who wondered, 'What happened to their pets?'"²⁶⁵ A study of middle school instruction on the Holocaust yielded more ambiguous conclusions. In order for middle school students to better identify and empathize with victims of the Holocaust, one scholar recommended that emphasizing "little details about daily life," which, "may seem mundane or

²⁶⁴ Samuel Totten, *Holocaust Education: Issues and Approaches* (Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2002): 161-168. For arguments in favor of teaching young children about the Holocaust, see Harriet Sepinwall, "Incorporating Holocaust Education into K-4 Curriculum and Teaching in the United States," *Social Studies & The Young Learner* 11 (1999): 5-8, among several others.

²⁶⁵ Simone A. Schweber, "'What Happened to Their Pets?': Third Graders Encounter the Holocaust," *Teachers College Record* 110 (2008): 2110. Studies in other nations generally reach the same conclusion regarding teaching the Holocaust to younger children. Regarding other studies attempting to determine age-appropriate instruction, see Edna Green Brabham, "Holocaust Education: Legislation, Practices, and Literature for Middle-School Students," *The Social Studies* 88 (1997): 139-148.

irrelevant when considering the broader historical context of the Holocaust can actually be the most helpful at allowing students to identify with the Holocaust survivor's story."²⁶⁶ There is no as yet "correct" answer as to the cognitively age-appropriate grade level where students should learn about the Holocaust. At best, scholars have, by and large, loosely agreed on the vague understanding that young elementary children are too young. Beyond that, much uncertainty remains. In the absence of general guidelines, teachers and state boards of education have seen fit to teach the Holocaust to nearly all grade levels in public schools across the country.

Politics of Recognition

The apparent success of mandatory Holocaust education in the state of Illinois resulted in many perceived benefits. Politicians heralded the mandate as a demonstration of their own moral prowess; opponents only able to agree with the merits. However, what a few observant legislators were apt to foretell was the development of a politics of recognition that could potentially erupt within the state. Indeed, several groups saw mandatory Holocaust education as a way to promote similar political agendas predicated on a history of abuse and genocide. The amendment to include a second unit of instruction in 2005 is an example of those efforts succeeding for Armenian-Americans, Ukrainian-Americans, Cambodian-Americans, Bosnian-Americans, Sudanese-Americans, and Rwandan-Americans. Certainly the crimes committed in those respective nations were genocidal acts. The task of Illinois legislators has now become how to mediate the suffering of other groups, specifically outside of the United States, within the context of mandatory Holocaust education. As was the case with Ukrainian-Americans in 2005, certain groups looking for political recognition could begin to address that recognition through

²⁶⁶ Natasha Wood, "'Hitler is a Bully': Middle School Students' Perspectives on Holocaust Education in Greater Victoria, British Columbia" (Master's thesis, University of Victoria, 2013), 108.

mandatory Holocaust education. However, within the context of the Holocaust education mandate, only the Ukrainian-Americans as a specific ethnic group lobbied the General Assembly for inclusion. Other examples were provided on many occasions by individual legislators, but direct engagement with the General Assembly by particular groups looking for inclusion by groups other than the Ukrainian-Americans was essentially non-existent. At each step, the Holocaust Memorial Foundation and other Jewish groups were consulted to ensure their acceptance of increased inclusion. The first and likely not the last effort to impact these politics of recognition was an attempt by Representative Sandra Pihos to include the Greek Pontian genocide which occurred within the confines of the Turkish Empire between approximately 1913 and 1923. In February of 2009, Rep. Pihos (a member of the secondary and elementary education subcommittee) introduced a bill adding the Pontian Greek genocide to the list of other acts of genocide to teach in addition to the Holocaust in a second unit of instruction.

House Bill 2508 was filed on February 19, and then received a first reading on February 20. It was referred to the Rules Committee where it was then assigned to the Elementary and Secondary Education Committee. On March 4, the bill received a Do Pass motion from the committee and placed on the General Assembly calendar for a second reading. After a short debate, the bill was placed on the calendar for a third reading; where it would be re-referred to the Rules Committee and then linger until 2011 where it was declared sine die, essentially burying the bill. What House Bill 2508 lacked, despite a Do Pass motion from the Elementary and Secondary Education Committee, was support from the community from which it was to represent. Rep. Pihos may have had a significant personal stake in the passage of the bill, but no witnesses appeared before either the General Assembly or the Education Committee, as had happened with previous bills. Although efforts such as those of Rep. Pihos did represent

reasonable attempts at amending the School Code, many other avenues were also pursued, some resulting in new mandates.

A brief example of one such educational mandate was one passed quite recently, in 2009 as public act 96-0629 in the state of Illinois. Developed within the Illinois Senate, the bill was developed by Senators William Delgado and Iris Martinez, with many sponsors in the House of Representatives. The bill was an amendment to the study of U.S. History, focused primarily on events of the Great Depression. Senators Delgado and Martinez argued thoroughly for a mandate to include within teaching the history of the U.S. that includes a study of the removal and deportation of nearly two million Mexican-American U.S. citizens within this time period. Although amended, the bill moved quickly through both the Illinois House and Senate, and finally signed into law by the governor on August 24th of 2009. Indeed, bills such as this represent the growing ability of educational legislation to begin to address and promote state educational policies specifically focused on the efforts of marginalized, or otherwise less-recognized, groups of people within the state. Mandatory Holocaust education has opened a new avenue for historical redress, whether specific to the U.S. or not. Political recognition often results. While teachers may only specifically choose one of the many units of instruction offered in addition to the Holocaust, the specific codification into law demonstrates recognition of past injustice. This aspiration to political recognition through educational means demonstrates not only a respect of the potential of the public schools as but one piece of the state power apparatus, but also ultimately in the redemptive power of education.

That faith in the potential of public education to correct the ills of society, while also seemingly allowing for the convenient lack of introspection at the problematic aspects of U.S. history is one that is already beginning to be challenged, and may prove difficult for legislators

into the future. At its core, Holocaust education is fundamentally about one event in history that defined the capabilities of modern industrialization when tasked with hatred. The bill to mandate the teaching of this event to all public school students ultimately reflects far more on the needs and political realities of the state of Illinois and others across the U.S. As mandatory Holocaust education has expanded, more diverse groups of individuals have sought recognition in the teaching of historical injustice as an effort to rectify those of the present. The result is a diverse array of classroom experiences and learning outcomes. Although many of the teachers tend to use many of the same films and other resources, the manner in which these mandates are written allows for interpretation and creativity in the classroom. What is more difficult to ascertain is the impact which Holocaust education has had, at a national level, on issues such as anti-Semitism, racism, and other forms of bigotry. The sad reality is that these issues remain very much alive and well.

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60 Minutes

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Genocide

Holocaust

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Roots

Shoah

Schindler's List

The Diary of Anne Frank (Broadway play)

This is Your Life: Hanna Bloch Kohner

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APPENDIX A: PUBLIC ACT 86-0780

HB003 Enrolled

AN ACT concerning schools.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing Section 27-20.3 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/27-20.3) (from Ch. 122, par. 27-20.3)

Sec. 27-20.3. Holocaust Study. Every public elementary school and high school shall include in its curriculum a unit of instruction studying the events of the Nazi atrocities of 1933 to 1945. This period in world history is known as the Holocaust, during which 6,000,000 Jews and The studying of this material is a reaffirmation of the commitment of free peoples from all nations to never again permit the occurrence of another Holocaust.

The State Superintendent of Education may prepare and make available to all school boards instructional materials which may be used as guidelines for development of a unit of instruction under this Section; provided, however, that each school board shall itself determine the minimum amount of instruction time which shall qualify as a unit of instruction satisfying the requirements of this Section.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.

Effective Date: 1/1/1990

APPENDIX B: PUBLIC ACT 094-0478

HB0312 Enrolled

LRB094 05143 RAS 35183 b

AN ACT concerning schools.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing Section 27-20.3 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/27-20.3) (from Ch. 122, par. 27-20.3)

Sec. 27-20.3. Holocaust and Genocide Study. Every public elementary school and high school shall include in its curriculum a unit of instruction studying the events of the Nazi atrocities of 1933 to 1945. This period in world history is known as the Holocaust, during which 6,000,000 Jews and millions of non-Jews were exterminated. One of the universal lessons of the Holocaust is that national, ethnic, racial, or religious hatred can overtake any nation or society, leading to calamitous consequences. To reinforce that lesson, such curriculum shall include an additional unit of instruction studying other acts of genocide across the globe. This unit shall include, but not be limited to, the Armenian Genocide, the Famine-Genocide in Ukraine, and more recent atrocities in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Sudan. The studying of this material is a reaffirmation of the commitment of free peoples from all nations to never again permit the occurrence of another Holocaust and a recognition that crimes of genocide continue to be perpetrated across the globe as they have been in the past and to deter indifference to crimes against humanity and human suffering wherever they may occur.

The State Superintendent of Education may prepare and make available to all school boards instructional materials which may be used as guidelines for development of a unit of instruction under this Section; provided, however, that each school board shall itself determine the minimum amount of instruction time which shall qualify as a unit of instruction satisfying the requirements of this Section.

(Source: P.A. 86-780.)

Section 90. The State Mandates Act is amended by adding Section 8.29 as follows:

(30 ILCS 805/8.29 new)

Sec. 8.29. Exempt mandate. Notwithstanding Sections 6 and 8 of this Act, no reimbursement by the State is required for the implementation of any mandate created by this amendatory Act of the 94th General Assembly.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.

Effective Date: 8/5/2005