

Reparations and Other Scams: Israeli Survivors Live in Poverty and Are Starving?

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The issue of reparations and other compensation has been much in the news of late, most particularly in relationship to possible payments to descendants of slaves in the United States to compensate them for their disadvantages brought about by what is claimed to be a persisting racist culture in the country. There is, of course, considerable resistance on the part of millions of non-black citizens who will have to foot the enormous bill even though they were not involved in slavery in any way, having arrived in the U.S. long after 1865, when involuntary servitude was abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

Reparations have been around for a long time, normally being exacted by the winners in a war against the losers, who automatically are blamed as the aggressors and therefore liable for the damages. Often the compensation comes in the form of territory, witness for example the German acquisition of Alsace-Lorraine from the French after the Franco-Prussian war followed by its return to France after the First World War. The Germans also were made to endure considerable cash and in-kind payments, primarily to France, after losing the First World War. The terms of the Treaty of Versailles were so onerous that they were subsequently blamed for perpetuating Franco-German hostility, leading inevitably to the Second World War.

Israel and Jewish groups were major [beneficiaries of the reparations](#) and restitution programs that were created as a result of World War Two. [The Luxembourg Agreement signed in 1952](#) committed West Germany to pay Israel a sum of 3 billion [Deutsche Marks](#) over the next fourteen years, which was at the time an enormous sum. An additional 450 million marks were paid to the World Jewish Congress. The payments that were made to the State of Israel regarded the government as the de facto heir to war victims who had no surviving family or who could not otherwise be identified. The money was mostly invested in the Israeli infrastructure and was significant in aiding in the initial development of the [economy of the new state](#), but there were also considerable barter arrangements whereby Israel purchasing agents obtained German manufactured goods and raw materials.

The reparations program was modified at various points to expand those eligible for benefits and continued to operate long after the fourteen-year term initially envisioned had expired. As of 2012, when the program was 60 years old, it was [still fully operational](#) and Germany had paid the Jewish state an estimated \$89 billion.

In the 1990s, Israel and Jewish groups began to go after other property that they claimed had either been sold at below market prices as Jews began to flee Germany or otherwise lost. Money trails in Swiss banks were investigated to chart the movement of funds that had originally been derived from Jewish owned property. Individual companies, mostly in Germany, were pressured by survivor groups to provide reparations to former forced

laborers, leading the Berlin government in 1999 to establish a separate fund to assist survivors of the holocaust. The Swiss and Hungarians set up similar funds and The World Jewish Restitution Organization was established to organize these efforts. In America, the U.S. Foreign Claims Settlement Commission pressured Germany in 1998-9 to compensate Jewish survivors who had arrived in the United States after the war.

Israel, of course, has a vested interest in continuing the flow of Euros by making Germans and other Europeans [continue to feel guilty](#) over the war. In 2007 the Israelis pressured the German government to expand the pension program for Jewish survivors of 1939-1945 who had wound up in Israel. In 2009 Israel demanded compensation of between 450 million and 1 billion Euros (\$1,120,000,000 currently) for 30,000 claimed former slave laborer-survivors. And the requirements for eligibility for a payment or pension continue to become [more permissive](#). A Jewish survivor qualifies if he lived in “a ghetto” for 12 months as will anyone who can demonstrate that he “hid from” the Nazis for at least six months. One acceptable “ghetto” is in Shanghai China. And given the destruction of many public records, there has been considerable fraud. In 2010 auditors found [evidence of a scheme](#) to use fake identification documents to defraud the German government of more than \$42 million.

And new and innovative sources of money are constantly being developed. The United States and Israel are currently [pressuring Poland](#), which was occupied by the Germans, to compensate Jewish property owners. It is particularly difficult to do as much of Warsaw and nearly all its public records were destroyed in 1944. In August 2019, no less than 88 U.S. Senators signed a letter urging Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to “act boldly and with urgency” to compel Poland to resolve the property issue. The Poles have argued that the proceedings would be subject to massive fraud and “frivolous lawsuits” while the demands could bankrupt the country.

Meanwhile [the French](#) and [Dutch](#) rail systems, also under German control, have been forced to pay compensation to survivors because their trains were used to transport Jewish prisoners to camps.

The story of [reparations and compensation](#) is of particular interest, not only because the Second World War ended 75 years ago last month, but also because of attempts by Israel and Jewish groups to squeeze some final payments out of the remaining survivors. Quite astonishing is a “campaign” [email currently being circulated](#) by an organization calling itself LATET - Israeli Humanitarian Aid. It promotes itself as a charitable foundation with “All donations...tax-deductible in Israel, the U.S., Canada, Australia, France and the U.K.” It describes its activity as:

“Due to Covid-19, many impoverished Holocaust survivors experience an extended stay in deficient and insecure homes. MORE THAN EVER, SUPPORT URGENT HOME REPAIRS THE SURVIVORS CAN'T AFFORD. 1 in 4 Holocaust survivors in Israel lives in poverty. As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, our elders spend all their time at home, mostly alone, in run-down apartments and they have nobody to turn to. The need to eliminate all safety hazards and obstacles relating to mobility, safety and comfort has grown and dozens of survivors are waiting for urgent assistance. Latet is the only organization in Israel providing Holocaust survivors in need with a complete aid package, including monthly food boxes, social support and an Emergency Fund for crucial needs. Since 2013, Latet has carried out more than 1,200 home repairs to increase the survivors' quality of life, at no cost to them. Everyday, 40 Holocaust survivors die. Let's make sure they spend their last days in decent

conditions.

“Donate now. Latet was founded in 1996 and is the largest Israeli NGO combating poverty. Acting as an umbrella organization, Latet provides for the basic needs of populations living in poverty and food insecurity, giving ongoing food assistance to over 200,000 people in Israel. The organization operates the leading national food bank and runs impactful aid programs. For the last 10 years it has been the only organization in Israel providing a comprehensive aid package to Holocaust survivors in need, including a monthly food box, emergency fund for medical and paramedical needs, home restorations as well as ongoing social support in the form of personal volunteers and social events throughout the year. For more information about Latet: www.latet.org.il/en/”

One should not necessarily doubt the fundamental decency of LATET and what they are seeking to do, but their solicitation raises some serious questions about the Israeli government and Jewish charities that have been the recipients of more than \$100 billion obtained as “reparations” from various foreigners, mostly Germans, specifically to address the needs of the so-called “Holocaust survivors.” How can the survivors be living in terrible conditions and even starving in a socialist country with a formidable safety net, one might ask Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, when they have been granted pensions and other compensation since 1952?

The answer would appear to be pretty simple, that the money has gone directly to the Israeli government and not to survivors of the Holocaust as well as to to major Jewish private organizations.

Unfortunately, compensating for claims of Jewish suffering is a big business. The regular annual scandalous multi-billion dollar cash flow out of the United States Treasury to fill the Israeli coffers will continue seemingly forever. American taxpayers might be delighted to learn that during the past week Congress, beset by plague, civil unrest and a crumbling infrastructure, found time to move [to approve](#) an additional \$500 million to Israel for its “defense.”

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