



## **A Serious Moral Failure at Yad Vashem**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** The public discourse on the issue of replacing the Chairman of the Directorate of Yad Vashem indicates that the institution no longer presents the Holocaust as a unique phenomenon and the most horrible enactment of antisemitism to have ever occurred, but as a crime against humanity that could occur in any society whose values are not liberal, including Israel. Yad Vashem, which was designed to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust and its victims, now trumpets the values of European liberalism—the very values that paved the way to a crime like no other in world history.

The Holocaust became possible for two basic reasons. The first is that in contrast to the scientific revolution, whose founders replaced the narratives and delusions of the Middle Ages with logically and empirically proven truth and strove ceaselessly to disseminate that truth, the liberal revolution denied and continues to deny the existence of any one truth.

The second reason is embodied in Nietzsche's proclamation that "God is dead," which expresses the idea of the death of biblical morality. The Hebrew Bible, which Christianity attached to the New Testament, was a shield that—while it did not prevent the persecution and abasement of the Jews—did prevent their destruction for more than 1,000 years.

Without truth and morality there is no need or ability to distinguish between good and evil, engage in soul-searching, and, where necessary, repent and change course. "Repentance and soul-searching," claimed Nietzsche, "repress human nature" and are inventions designed to Judaize the world. Tapping into dark pre-medieval myths that Nazism adopted and augmented, Nietzsche asserted that "real heroes do not repent and do not agonize."

According to the Jewish outlook, the human image is not an inborn gift of God but a goal that humanity must strive to achieve. By eliminating truth and,

in its wake, morality and conscience, the liberal intellectual elite of Europe erased more than 1,000 years of Christian effort to distance humanity from its pagan and uncivilized past and endow it with moral awareness. In so doing, it paved the road to the emergence of the barbaric and mendacious ideologies of communism and Nazism.

In the absence of a shield of morality, truth, and conscience, the false ideologies that liberalism fostered had no compunction about granting legitimacy to the eradication of Jewish civilization, and later to the eradication of the Jews themselves—after all, the Jews represented the old morality and conscience that those ideologies sought to replace.

The lack of such a shield also prevented European intellectuals who had abandoned Christianity and its values but were repelled by Nazism from finding, in the alternative liberal and humanistic values they had espoused, the moral justification and inner resolve to resist it. Therefore, liberals throughout Western Europe—not only in Germany—were either complicit in the Holocaust industry or stood by and kept silent.

Liberalism has never acknowledged that its denial of the fundamental value of *truth* played a central role in the unfolding of the Holocaust. Hence it is very much in doubt whether the most important lesson of the Holocaust has been learned and whether the wall of morality, truth, and conscience that collapsed at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been rebuilt in this century.

The criticism by liberal intellectuals, including senior Holocaust scholars, of Israel's treatment of the "other," their comparing of its actions to the deeds of the Nazis, and their warnings that "darkness never falls all at once" clearly indicate that these individuals have not internalized the cardinal lesson of the Holocaust. Just as liberal intellectuals paved the way to the Holocaust and stood aloof as it unfolded, they are the last to understand the real reason why it happened.

Yad Vashem is trying to impart to Israel's many critics both at home and abroad the conclusions and values of the very liberalism that is yet to either acknowledge its responsibility for Holocaust or address its own failings. That the institution is taking this line rather than promoting the values of the original, *moral* liberal humanism that the perpetrators of the Holocaust sought to expunge bespeaks an appalling moral confusion.

Remedying this failure must be the first task of the institution's next director.

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