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UCSB Hist 133c source exploration

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**Germany’s 1952 Reparation Agreement With Israel In Newspaper Accounts**

Document found on GHDI:

* Communiqué Regarding Restitution for Israel and the Jews (September 10, 1952)
  + http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\_document.cfm?document\_id=4500
* The original Comminique could not be found, however GHDI cites two different books it was reprinted in
  + Reinhard Bettzuege, ed., *Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Dokumente von 1949 bis 1994* [*Foreign Policy of the Federal Republic of Germany. Documents from 1949 to 1994*]. Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1995, p. 200
  + Merith Niehuss and Ulrike Linder, eds., *Besatzungszeit, Bundesrepublik und DDR, 1945-1969*[*Occupation Period, Federal Republic, and German Democratic Republic, 1945-1969*]. Deutsche Geschichte in Quellen und Darstellung, edited by Rainer A. Müller, vol. 10. Stuttgart: P. Reclam, 1998, pp. 234-36
* The source document is a statement detailing the restitution agreement Germany has agreed to pay Israel as a result of its actions in regards to Jews during the Holocaust. In the statement it cites the reasoning for the reparation payments as aiding the Jewish refugees from world war two and the holocaust integrate into Israel. It also states that in the agreement payments will be made to various Jewish institutions in an effort to integrate Jewish people into a variety of countries

On September 10th, 1952 West Germany signed the “Luxemburg Agreement” with Israel. In the agreement signed by Adenauer and Moshe Sharett, Germany agreed to pay a sum totaling $822,000,000 to Israel and various Jewish institutions to compensate for the antisemitic deeds carried out under Hitler and the Nazis. However, the agreement, events leading to the signing, and implementations of the agreement did not come without controversy. For starters there was the moral dilemma on the part of Israel as to whether or not to accept money from Germany in order to better their country, and the message that would be sent if they did so. This manifested itself in riots that resulted in the hospitalization of both police officers and civilians that totaled around 400 people. The January riot also gave a voice to Israeli extremists who did not want to see Israel cut deals with Germany, and several extremists still conveyed their disapproval of the agreement following its signing, and threatened violence as a response. Israel and Germany also struggled to negotiate a fair price of reparations, and talks between the two countries lasted several months with talks going back and forth, and even stopping all together at one point in time. Israel was also dealing with an economic crisis following the Arab-Israel war in 1948, complicating matters as it pertained to money even further. Many people believed that the reparations that came from Germany came in the nick of time due to the potential failure of the economy following the war. The Arab-Israel war also proved problematic for relations between the Arab league and Germany as many Arab countries protested the reparations given to Israel because at the time they were technically at war with Israel, and attempted to halt trade between themselves and Germany. Despite the protests and backlash against the reparations the deal was made, and in March of 1953 payments and goods from West Germany began flowing in to Israel.

As illustrated in the articles below, the reparations agreement between Israel and Germany incited controversy as well as inner-conflict within the nations and individuals affected by it. There was no, and has never been a consensus about the reparation payments and their morality, and in retrospect they serve partly as a jumping off point for larger conversations pertaining to the holocaust, how to deal with tragedy and devastation, and how to move forward following such gross injustice (For both Germany and Israel and Jewish people). The reparation agreement between Germany and Israel is a complex story filled with emotion and controversy. By examining accounts surrounding the event we can get a glimpse into this profound event in our human history.

**Annotated Bibliography In Chronological Order**

* “Israel Demands 1 1/2 Billions For Hitler Seizures: Recalls Slaughter Of 6 Million Jews.” (1951, Mar 14). *Chicago Daily Tribune*

<https://search.proquest.com/docview/178135867?accountid=14522>

This article from the Chicago Tribune details Israel’s initial demands to Germany for reparations and cites $1.5B as the first request when negotiating with Germany. Moshe Shamett reportedly decided on this number based on the estimated cost to resettle approximately 500,000 Jews into Israel from European countries.

* “Hundreds seized, hurt in Jerusalem rioting”. (1952, Jan 09). *Los Angeles Times*

<https://search.proquest.com/docview/166278451?accountid=14522>

This news article details the riots that occurred in January by people in Israel that opposed the talks occurring between Germany and Israel with regards to reparations. The article says that 2,000 people stormed the parliament building, and the altercation with police lasted more than two hours. It also says that barbed-wire barricades were erected, and around 240 civilians and 160 police officers were hospitalized.

* “Holocaust Restitution: German Reparations.” *German Holocaust Reparations,* American Israeli Cooperative Enterprise (2019) <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/german-holocaust-reparations>.

This article gives an overall summary of the origins of the agreement as well as the implementation of the money. However, most notably this article speaks about the riots that occurred in January prior to the agreement being signed, saying that many Jews living in Israel were unhappy that Israel were in talks with Germany about reparations. It also names Menachen Begin and the Herut Party as the most vocal members of the opposition. The article says that debate over whether or not to accept payment lasted three days and was eventually passed by a majority vote of 61-50, and that the police used tear gas to disperse the rioters, and arrested nearly 200 people.

* “Israel Rejects German Offer Of Reparations.” (1952, Apr 08). *Chicago Daily Tribune*

<https://search.proquest.com/docview/178231675?accountid=14522>

This article details Israel’s dissatisfaction with West Germany’s counter offers regarding reparation payments. The article says that Israel has, for the time being, halted talks with Germany with regards to reparations, and feels that their offers up to this point have been unsatisfactory.

* “Bonn, Israel Sign Restitution Pact.”(1952, Sep 11). *New York Times.*

<https://search.proquest.com/docview/112449557?accountid=14522>

This article was published the day after the Luxemburg Agreement was signed. It is a first hand account detailing the events that took place during the signing, as well as citing the actual number of $822,000,000 that Germany has agreed to pay to Israel following back and forth negotiations. It also states that 24 world Jewish groups were represented in the ceremony.

* “Bonn Pact Arouses Israel Extremists: Nationalist Party Threatens Action And Resistance And Calls For Vote On Accord.” (1952, Sep 12).*New York Times.* <https://search.proquest.com/docview/112343491?accountid=14522>

This newspaper article details some extremist reactions to the agreement being signed. In the article it says that extremists belonging to the Herut party threatened “action and resistance” only two days following the signing of the Luxemburg agreement.

* “Restitution To Jews.” (1952, September 26). *The Times (London, England)*, p. 5.

http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/A72Xq2

This news article and embedded quotations given by a German correspondent details Germany’s intentions in paying reparations to Israel. They say that the reparations that have been given to Israel are meant to foster good relation between the two nations going forward in light of the atrocities committed against Jews under the Nazis and is not meant to hurt any Arab nations in any way. It also says that the reparations are intended to go to producing goods that will ultimately aid the Israeli state.

* “West German trade group barred by Saudi Arabians.” (1952, Nov 07). *Chicago Daily Tribune.*

https://search.proquest.com/docview/178522502?accountid=14522

This article details Saudi Arabia barring German officials from their country to discuss a trade treaty shortly after Germany had signed the Luxemburg Agreement. They did so in protest of the Agreement being signed, saying that they could not continue to speak with Germany in good faith as they were giving money to a country that they were still technically at war with, and claimed that that money should be going toward Arab refugees.

* “Arabs threaten break with West Germany.” (1952, Nov 09). *Los Angeles Times* https://search.proquest.com/docview/166391399?accountid=14522

This news article describes the threat that several states within the Arab league dictated to Germany following their agreement with Israel. The article cites an ultimatum given to the German ambassador to Egypt as the official threat, and also says that their chairman said that any reparations given to Israel from Germany posed a bigger threat to the Arab world than losing trade with Germany. It also says that the reparations would effectively nullify the blockade put up, and aid Israel in potential military endeavors against any Arab nations.

* “Israel Will Permit Entry Of Bonn Ships.” (1953, Mar 04).*New York Times* <https://search.proquest.com/docview/112580869?accountid=14522>

This article states that Israel had lifted the Ban of German ships in their country. Israel did so to allow the reparation payments to start flowing in.

* Reparations to Israel starting. (1953, Jul 24). *New York Times* <https://search.proquest.com/docview/112656477?accountid=14522>

This article is a short paragraph in the New York Times detailing a small piece of the reparations being implemented. This piece and many others like it show how the reparations were paid and implemented. In this particular article it says that 50,000 iron rails have been sent from Germany to Israel to help with construction.

* Honig, Frederick. “The Reparations Agreement between Israel and the Federal Republic of Germany.” *American Journal of International Law* 48, no. 4 (1954): 564–78.

This article details the history of the Luxemburg agreement, as well as provide commentary on the nuances of the agreement. Specifically, it speaks about how the goods and money are to be used, the contingencies of the agreement, and the difficulties that arose since at the time of the events that gave rise to the reparations West Germany was not in existence, and Israel was not yet constituted in its legal form.

* Balabkins, Nicholas. 1971. *West German reparations to Israel*. New Brunswick (N.J.): Rutgers University Press.

This book gives a detailed background of the reparation agreement. It discusses the events that led up to the agreement, the people that were involved in it, the state of West Germany before and after the payments, the state of Israel before and after the payments, the implementation by Israel of the reparation payments, and the morality of accepting the payments on Israel’s end. The book takes a wide-angled lens of the agreement, and then looks closely at its details.

* Slyomovics, S. (2014). *How to accept German reparations*. Philadelphia, Pa: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press.

This book examines the moral implications of the reparations agreement between Israel and Germany. It delves into the dilemma of the potential message that could be sent that because reparation payments have been accepted that the heinous crimes committed against Jews in World War II can be forgiven or forgotten about. It also questions the value of a human life, as well as how to measure pain and suffering monetarily with regards to the Holocaust.