REPORT from panel discussions and remarks within the symposium

Ten Years with the Stockholm Declaration,
January 26th, 2010
Report/Summary from Panel One:
Ten years with the Stockholm Declaration – what have we learnt?

**Moderator:** Mr. Göran Rosenberg  
**Panellists:** Mr. Konstanty Gebert, Professor David Cesarani, Dr. Cecilie Stokholm Banke, Dr. Paul Levine

Moderator Mr. Göran Rosenberg initiated the discussion by asking the panellists to comment, from their respective perspectives, on what we, in the field of Holocaust studies, have learnt over the last ten years.

The panellists all agreed on the importance of the geo-political changes that have taken place since the end of the Cold War and which have led to the opening of archives in Eastern and Western Europe and in the United States. Access to these archives has resulted in a better scholarly understanding of the structures of the Nazi-genocides, the vastness of the genocide of Jews in Eastern Europe, as well as a better knowledge about the local collaborators who helped the Nazis in the persecutions. The access to new documents has also provided an understanding of the vast amount of beneficiaries of the war and some more explanations to why so many people, governments and institutions did not want to talk about their role in the war. Some documents show, for example, how much British intelligence knew, already during the war, about the murder of the Jews and about their persecutors. These findings have raised questions about why the Allies did not stop the genocide at an earlier stage, and why British and American intelligence did not hand over information about the perpetrators to the war-crime tribunals immediately after the war.

In the discussions panellists mentioned two groundbreaking books in the research of the Holocaust published in the last decade. The first one: “Hitler’s People’s State” is written by German historian Götz Aly who explores how German civilians gave their consent to the war due to the financial benefits they received from the looting of Jewish assets and gains in the occupied countries. The second book “Neighbors: (mentioned by Prof. Timothy Snyder’s reflections on the victim/perpetrator roles in Panel Two). The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland” is written by American-Polish historian Jan Gross. The book enabled a nation-wide debate in Poland, re-examining the victim-role and the national myths, helping in re-shaping the national image of victim-hood, forcing Poland to take on the responsibility as perpetrator and collaborator.

It was concluded that self-reflective processes, as in Germany and Poland, have taken place in several other European countries over the last decade, partly as a result of the Stockholm Declaration and the work of the International Task Force (ITF).

It was noted that through the opened archives and new scholarship, the public has learnt more about the genocide in Eastern Europe as well as about Jewish life in Europe before the Holocaust. However, the panel agreed, it is difficult to know if the increased work for better knowledge about the Holocaust actually has generated a more tolerant and less discriminating public, or if it has, as some claim, rather increased the “Holocaust fatigue”.
Moderator Mr. Göran Rosenberg, notably troubled by the observation that increased efforts in Holocaust education may actually not lead to a better understanding of the Holocaust nor the prevention of future genocides, returned to Professor Yehuda Bauer’s point about text and context in Holocaust education and asked the panellists whether the Holocaust is taught in the wrong way.

Dr. Paul Levine, Director of the Uppsala University Program for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, pointed out that when non-specialists refer to the Holocaust they are likely to refer to some aspect or manifestation or representation of the memory of the event rather than to facts, indicating that the Holocaust, indeed, has been taught in the wrong way: memory first and facts second. This teaching method results in poor general knowledge of the Holocaust among non-specialists and teachers, not to mention among their students and may even undermine the moral lessons that can be drawn from the Holocaust, aiding in the prevention of future genocides. Dr. Levine called for more and better Holocaust education in schools and universities throughout Europe.

Mr. Konstanty Gebert questioned if we, in fact, have learnt anything over the last ten years since we obviously stood by while the genocides in Rwanda and Darfur took place. The last decade has rather shown how difficult it is to act on what genocide scholars call “early warnings of genocide” and that preventing genocide takes much more than good political intentions. Mr. Gebert called for politicians to increase the status of the International Criminal Court and to ensure that war criminals will be punished for their crimes against humanity.
Transcripts of panelists introductory remarks:
Professor David Cesarani, Mr. Konstanty Gebert, Dr. Paul Levine, Dr. Cecilie Stokholm Banke

Professor David Cesarani:
*Please note that this is a transcript from a taped oral presentation.*

During the ten-year-period since the Stockholm Declaration there have been some extraordinary changes in the European geopolitics, which has had an impact on Holocaust scholarship. Since the regime changes in Eastern Europe, in 1991 and onward, there has been an opening up of archives. Historians from North America and from Western Europe have swarmed into the archives in the former Soviet block to plough through millions upon millions of documents.

Of course many of us thought that someone would emerge with that piece of paper, that one order from Hitler. They did not find one and I personally do not think that the new documents that have been explored in Riga, in Vilnius or in Prague have shed much new light on the perpetrators. I don’t think that we have come to understand the perpetrators and why they did what they did much better than we did before we had access to these archives.

What we have learnt more about through the opening of the archives, is the genocide of the Jews in Eastern Europe and about those who collaborated with the Nazis, those who were recruited locally in Eastern Europe and of course the plunder of the Jews, the theft of Jewish assets and art work.

This new knowledge has shown how wide the circle of beneficiaries of the war became. How much occupied Europe and also neutral countries profited from the plunder and how this, not only created the blood bond by which the Nazis drew people into the genocide, but also created a confederacy of thieves who had an economic interest in propping up the Nazi- and collaboralist governments for as long as possible, and after those regimes had been toppled of maintaining a silence about what had occurred, since there were millions of people who didn’t want the truth to come out.

There is one last point about what we have learnt that I want to end with: one of the most surprising consequences of the changes that occurred with the end of the Cold War. Suddenly when the pressure was off, it was possible to allow historians into these previously secret archives. Teams of researchers went through millions of documents generated by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the CIA and what came out of those documents were truly a revelation in two parts: first how much the Western Allies knew about the destruction of the Jews of Europe, of course raising massive questions about why they did so little to interfere with it, and secondly, their role in covering it up afterward. British intelligence, which had successfully broken German police codes and messages from killing units and death camps, had documentation which recorded exactly how many Jews had been murdered in operation Reinhard up until the end of 1942. They had information on cadres of Nazis involved in the mass shooting in the East and the running of concentration camps and death camps. They had information which they did not provide to any of the war-crime tribunals after the war - Information that could have sent more Nazis to the gallows!
Professor Norman Goda has revealed how the OSS and the CIA protected some of Eichman’s key henchman because they had information on the Soviet Secret Service and Soviet military tactics that might have been useful to the Allies after the war. These are some of the most extraordinary information over the last ten years that flow directly from the political changes in the 1990s.

As for the next ten years: well, tragically the record of humanitarian intervention over the last decade has been very mixed. Ultimately it does not matter what scholars come up with in their analysis of the origins of genocide or how to see the warning signs - genocide prevention is always going to be in the hands of politicians. Public opinion against racism, discrimination and let alone genocide will have no effect unless there is a willingness amongst politicians to take political risks and to translate public outcry into practical measures.

The best thing that could happen for genocide prevention, and here I am being very cynical, is that a small weak, relatively insignificant country without any strong allies is taken over by a genocidal maniac who threatens to annihilate part of the population, triggering a world wide outcry and military intervention under the auspices of the United Nations, which would give humanitarian intervention and genocide prevention a model to work with!

Mr. Konstanty Gebert:
Please note that this is a transcript from a taped oral presentation.

When I thought about what we have learnt since the Stockholm Declaration, the first thought that came to my mind was Darfur and therefore my answer is: nothing. We have learnt nothing! We have allowed for another genocide to take place.

When I started deconstructing the question, I realized that it depends on who the “we” are: President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan certainly has learnt a lot. He has learnt that yes you can get away with a genocide if you just don’t lose a war in the meantime. What he did not take into consideration is that he now is a wanted man, that there is a warrant for his arrest by the International Criminal Court and that he probably does not sleep safe at night - thus some progress has been made.

A most interesting and troublesome fact is that the story of the Shoah is seen as a success story. For the first time in human history, the victims’ group- narrative of suffering has become the universal memory. Our own memory of the Shoah has become the story of the Holocaust. This is no small success – ask the Armenians who can’t get their story recognized even by the descendants of their perpetrators. Take a street poll of who killed whom in Rwanda; was it the Hutu killing Tutsi or Tutsi killing Hutu or does it matter anyway? In this sense the story of the Shoah has been a success-story.

But there is a price to success. People will envy you - on the pinnacle of suffering there is room only for one. According to a recent opinion poll 42 percent of Europeans believe that the Jews are using the past to extort money from Europeans - there is the price you pay for success.
If you do a Google-search on Holocaust and Jews you get about a quarter of a million hits, if you drop the Jews and just search on Holocaust the pages increases three-fold. Everybody wants to have a holocaust of their own. We have lost control of our story. It is no longer our story. The Holocaust in popular culture has become a genre. There are Holocaust movies and Holocaust novels, containing all kinds of content and Jews no longer are consulted about the Holocaust in popular culture, the way nobody asks cowboys about Westerns. Over all this is not a pretty picture.

How do we improve things over the next coming years? Ten years ago, when the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was established, most people were laughing, though not everybody. We got information from the field that Serbian officers were requesting orders in writing, just in case.

I am not a great believer in the moral glory of the law, especially not international law. But I do think that law that carries with it, if not the certainty then at least the reasonable probability of punishment, is a great factor in engineering social change. If the bastards are scared, they will kill less. My recommendation to whoever is in power is to increase the standing of the International Criminal Court – please, do it in our shared common interest.

Dr. Paul Levine:
Please note that this is a transcript from a taped oral presentation.

Some years ago, Holocaust educator Michael Morris said: “Researching and teaching the Holocaust is not quite like researching and teaching everything else. It is special in a way that is not commonly discussed for a variety of reasons, among them that this is an emotionally charged topic. The questions historians put about it tend to become broad rather than narrow, requiring the making of distinctions frequently avoided in other fields of study.”

I have discovered that there is a distinction between the Holocaust, which most people refer to, and the History of the Holocaust. When talking about the Holocaust, most people are actually referring to the memory of the Holocaust, not the events themselves. In general, when non-specialists refer to the Holocaust they are more likely referring to some aspects or manifestation or representation of the memory of the event. Often, they just do not know much about the history.

It seems reasonable, though, to think that those who use Auschwitz as a moral metaphor would know, in order to draw credible moral conclusions, something beyond the bare details of what actually happened and why, by whom and to who in that corner of South-Western Poland between 1940 and 1945. Logically it seems impossible to understand the moral lessons of Auschwitz without first understanding at least something of that time and place. Without that knowledge, the credibility of the teacher is at stake and with it the credibility of the moral message.

With the recent proliferation in the subject, pedagogical discussions around the Holocaust have been dominated by its vast and troubling consequences, rather than an explication of its historical realities. This historical discourse, dominated by memory, is too often a move away from historical context into emotional inaccuracies, misconceptions and even
mystifications. Even ten years after the Stockholm Declaration, the subject is too often taught in the wrong order: memory first then history.

I think one of the great ways of combating this particular problem is to use texts heavily, in the form of documents, and today we have so many more documents at hand than we did 15 years ago.

How do we improve things over the next coming years? Well, every year about 25 students sign up to the course I give in Holocaust History at Uppsala University. Ten years ago about half of those students were Swedish and the rest visiting, international students. Today, ten years after the Stockholm Declaration, I have three Swedish students taking the class at most. My specific recommendation for the coming years is an increase in the education budget. We need to offer more classes on the Holocaust. We need to educate more teachers in teaching the Holocaust and we need more Holocaust historians and more genocide scholars in every country.

**Dr. Cecilie Stockholm Banke:**

*Please note that this is a transcript from a taped oral presentation.*

These ten years with the Stockholm Declaration have also been my ten years within this field of research and my thoughts are based on my own personal experience.

There are three things that we have learnt since the Stockholm International Forum in January 2000:

- We know more about Eastern Europe because of new access to the archives in Eastern Europe. The broader public has learnt about what took place in Eastern Europe during the war even though historians may have known it before. The public has also learnt more about Jewish life in Europe before Auschwitz and the gas-chambers.
- During these ten years we have also learnt how difficult it is to react on what genocide scholars call “an early warning”. In the late 1990s, a certain belief in human intervention and genocide prevention existed in the international community. However, as the experience in Darfur has demonstrated, preventing genocide takes much more than good political intentions.
- Thirdly: we have learnt that political will can be activated and lead to institutions like our host today, The Living History Forum or my own Danish Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. These institutes have as primary focus to teach the lessons of the Holocaust but, in fact, we still do not know anything about the impact of these teachings. We do not know if teaching the Holocaust or other genocides help in creating more tolerant and less discriminating people. Neither do we know if teaching the Holocaust has an opposite effect, namely Holocaust fatigue and denial.

From where I sit, at the Danish Center, I think the main outcome of the Stockholm Declaration is perhaps not so much new knowledge about the driving forces behind genocides, neither would I guarantee that the memory of the Holocaust is being kept alive by our efforts in teaching it. But I do think that the Stockholm Declaration is a sign of how powerful the past has become in present-day politics. I say this referring to the development
in my own country. Addressing the Holocaust specifically, and investigating Denmark’s own share of responsibility during the war, happened, in my view, mainly as a result of the Stockholm International Forum conferences.

What I think we should take with us for the next ten years is a very humble hope. This morning I met with a group of Swedish high-school students. Together we watched the exhibit “Dinner with Pol Pot” at the Living History Forum. The exhibit shows how a group of left-wing intellectuals, in 1978, travelled to Democratic Kampuchea, present-day Cambodia. They visited hospitals, work collectives and emptied cities. They even had dinner with Pol Pot without questioning his totalitarian ideas. The exhibit at The Living History Forum is a nice example of how the new generations can learn from their parents’ mistakes in, for example, believing in totalitarian ideas.
**Report/Summary from Panel Two:**
Ten years with the Stockholm Declaration - what has been the impact?

**Moderator:** Mr. Göran Rosenberg
**Panelists:** Mr. Francis Deng, Professor Timothy Snyder, Senior Advisor Elinor Hammarskjöld, Ambassador Tom Vraalsen, Dr. Jens Kroh

Moderator Mr. Göran Rosenberg opened the second panel by asking Senior Advisor to the Swedish Foreign Ministry on Human Rights issues, Elinor Hammarskjöld, to comment on what the impact of the Stockholm Declaration has been and whether the world is better off now, ten years after the creation of the Declaration, compared to before. Hammarskjöld mentioned a number of improvements over the last ten years that can be related to the Declaration, such as the capacity of the international community to respond to the most serious crimes, the mandate held by Mr. Deng in the United Nations dealing specifically with prevention of genocide and the establishment of the International Criminal Court. However, Hammarskjöld added, despite the Declaration, the international community has also failed over the last ten years. The responsibility for the international community to act does not start at genocide, she said, and emphasized the importance of early recognition of the steps leading up to genocide in order for the international community to intervene at an early stage.

Professor Timothy Snyder, returned to the text of the Stockholm Declaration and the strife to prevent future genocides through knowledge about the Holocaust. “But how can one prevent future genocides through knowledge of the Holocaust if there is no knowledge of the Holocaust?” Snyder asked, and argued that the knowledge about the Holocaust, even ten years after the opening of the archives in Eastern Europe, is Western-centric. He further argued the importance of a shift in core Holocaust education, from the identification with the victims to the bystander, and to some extent the perpetrator, a shift which could help in identifying signs of a burgeoning genocide. “Identifying with the victim-position could put people into a lot of trouble”, said Snyder and pointed out that most wars are victim-wars. The Soviet Union was a victim of an imperialist conspiracy according to Stalin. Nazi-Germany was a victim of the powerful Jews, and America’s war in Iraq came out of the victim-position in the September 11-attacks, said Snyder.

Dr. Jens Kroh examined the use of history for political purposes, recalling how the German Foreign Minister, Mr., Joschka Fischer, in 1999, argued that he has not only learnt “no more war” but also “no more Auschwitz,” in order to justify the German army’s participation in the NATO-bombings against Serbia – “a questionable use of history for contemporary politics”, said Dr. Jens Kroh. He further evaluated the political impact of the Stockholm Declaration, highlighting the Declaration’s importance in putting the Holocaust on the European political agenda and for initiating a process of individual European countries to come to terms with their negative pasts – “a trend that carries with it risks when society leaders and the cultures of memory respectively do not question their own national myth, but insist only on other’s historic wrongdoing”, said Kroh and cited German historians Nora and Herbert who are concerned about political attempts to legislate historical truths and to define how history should be remembered in the future.
Ambassador Tom Vraalsen, expressed his impatience with the international community’s inability to intervene in genocides, giving Darfur as an example. There are nice treaties and institutions, Vraalsen said, but the willingness from governments to act is lacking. Ambassador Vraalsen called for help from the academic community to translate their research into practical policies, in order to more actively fight current trends of racism and anti-Semitism.

Mr. Deng agreed with Ambassador Vraalsen on trying to bridge the dichotomy between scholarship and politics but also suggested that more focus rather would be put on the analyses of why governments do not intervene in genocide situations. We need to look closer at what makes these governments take a step back and hesitate to intervene, Mr. Deng said.

Moderator Mr. Göran Rosenberg summarized Panel Two saying that on an institutional level the Stockholm Declaration had pushed for several positive developments. On the level of Holocaust education, however, there is a lot more to wish for in terms of broader historical knowledge among specialists and general public. Rosenberg pointed out that there among European countries has been a move from a general acceptance of the past into a more ethno-centric or nationalist perspective of the Holocaust, which may carry with it the instrumentalization of the Holocaust for political purposes. The moderator summarized the challenges on two different levels: that of governments, and what they can do to prevent genocides, and that of educators and their work for more tolerance in their societies and for genocide prevention in the daily lives and minds of the general citizen.
Transcripts of introductory remarks by panelists:

Mr. Francis Deng, Professor Timothy Snyder, Senior Advisor Elinor Hammarskjöld, Ambassador Tom Vraalsen, Dr. Jens Kroh

Senior Advisor Elinor Hammarskjöld:

*Please note that this is a transcript from a taped oral presentation.*

I think we are better off today with the Stockholm Declaration than ten years ago. One example can be found in the capacity of the international community to respond to the most serious crimes. But it is very clear from our discussion here today that we still have a lot of work to do, and that we have some recent failings that we have to learn from.

I come into this discussion as a practitioner and an international lawyer and I want to say a few words about the tool box at our disposal and to look at the impact of the Stockholm Declaration in the light of the subsequent conferences, including the Stockholm International Forum in 2004. I will speak more about context than text - to go back to Professor Bauer’s gripping introduction today.

I think the Stockholm Declaration and the subsequent conferences left us with a broad imperative to learn from the Holocaust, to remember the Holocaust, but also to look ahead and to prevent future genocides and the most serious crimes against international law. I think the International Task Force for Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF) is an important part of the impact of the declaration. The ITF is a forum which helps us, members, to do what this declaration asks us to do. In Sweden certainly, the work of the Living History Forum has contributed to that.

On a global level, I think the tool box has improved quite a lot the last ten years as a direct result of the discussions held in Stockholm. Now, for example, there is the mandate held by Mr. Deng in the United Nations, dealing specifically with prevention of genocide. More broadly, I think we have a more coherent framework to deal with the protection of civilians illustrated in three trends:

- We have the recognition in the United Nation’s Security Council that security does not come without the protection of human rights and international humanitarian law.
- The second trend is our ability to act on the ground. There is a strengthened capacity for crises management, from a small civilian presence to a large military intervention.
- The third trend has been touched upon earlier today: international justice, including the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

Sweden has just come out of heading the European Union, and as a European I can see important developments in the EU-capacity to act to prevent genocides and other serious crimes, a crises management capacity that is maybe built on EU’s comparative advantage. EU also has the full range of policy instruments - from political dialogue to military presence on the ground, development, trade and so called soft power. We also integrate the respect for international law including conventional genocide, human rights laws and international humanitarian law in the foreign policy of the EU.
The role that Sweden plays in the foreign policy in the EU also brings with it the responsibility at home and I think there is reason for us to be self critical. As others have said, the key challenge is to translate a stronger political and more coherent will into practice on the ground. There are situations where our ability to prevent has been tested and we have failed. I think that the fundamental premise that came out of the UN-summit was that there is an intrinsic link between security development and human rights, but when we try to translate it into practice multilaterally, it becomes difficult.

A final self critical point: I think we can do more to frame the responsibility to act before a crisis reaches genocidal acts or genocide. The responsibility for the international community to act does not start at genocide.

To round off: What can we do? I think we can do more as an international community and as interested actors on prevention to counteract the ghosts and sensitivities surrounding prevention. We need to keep pushing the implementations of international law. We need to implement already existing obligations for states, and we need to continue to speak out against violations, including all forms of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance. I also think we need to strengthen the link between early warning and action.

Ten years ago, I was an advisor to an inquiry about the UN-role in Rwanda and one of our conclusions was that the information was there. Human rights reports pointed at clear risks for genocide, but they were not taken on board. We have an even better set of mechanisms providing that kind of information today. But I am not sure that we have reached a point where we can trust that they will be fully integrated into the policy decisions.

Two final points: I think we do need to learn more about the mechanisms of genocide and we need to be careful not to lose the specific aspects that lead to genocide. And finally, I could not agree more with Mr. Gebert on the importance of pushing support for international justice. I think that what we have achieved over the last ten years is the recognition that justice has patience, and that international justice comes even after a long time sometimes. The fear that if we commit abuses, we will be brought to the Hague, I think is a legacy that goes back to the Stockholm Declaration.

**Professor Timothy Snyder:**

*Please note that this is a transcript from a taped oral presentation.*

I would like to raise a couple of points that worry me. They do not have anything to do with the Stockholm Declaration, in which I have no particular expertise, but with the understanding of the Holocaust in the last ten years.

My first concern has to do with memory. Over the last ten years it strikes me that in education, popular culture, in journalism and especially in films, the way to understand the Holocaust has been to identify with the victims. Now, obviously the victims ought to be remembered and obviously one ought to identify with them to some extent. However, I do think that taking on the victim-position can distort events, and it can distort moral reasoning, and other reasoning as well.
I want to recall what Professor Bauer said this morning about subjects and objects. People who are alive are subjects. Very often, people who are victims are objects. The Holocaust of course involved killing people, so the moment in which they became victims in the clearest sense, they are already dead. That for me is a problematic moment to start identifying with them because when they are, so to speak, dead they cannot defend themselves by thought or action. In choosing to identify with victims of mass murder we are, in a way, objectifying. We are giving ourselves a tremendous freedom, and I think that can be problematic.

How can it be problematic? Once one take on the victim identification, it is very easy to drop the Jewish part of it. Maybe the person is a victim representing another group, but then one ends up with a discussion about who suffered more, which is not always productive. But I think that the problem is worse than that.

The problem is that a victim-position is not a specific position necessarily. It can be, but it can also be an extraordinarily violent position. To give a recent example: the Iraq-war, the second one, was very much a victims' war. The Americans portrayed themselves as victims of an attack on September 11, which of course a few thousand of us were. But the rationalization for going to war was very much on the basis of identifying with the victims of genocide. And, of course, we ended up killing many more innocent people than innocent people were killed in our own country, all while identifying ourselves, as we still do, as victims.

I want to take the argument even further. I do not think there is any genocide that has been perpetrated without the victim position. Stalin always presented collectivization and the terror as a necessary preemptive action because the Soviet Union was a victim of an international imperialist conspiracy. Hitler always presented the Jews as being so powerful as to represent an international conspiracy victimizing Germans. That is the content of Hitler’s important speech in January 1939 that Professor Bauer cited.

Of course we ought to understand the victims and we ought to remember them, but in identifying with them and in shifting the identification with them on to our own concerns rather than historical concerns we can get ourselves into a lot of trouble.

So what should we do? I think it is important, although it may not sound that interesting, to try to identify with the bystanders. Think about the US during World War II. The US, during World War II when it comes to the Holocaust, was largely a bystander. Now, we do not think about it that way. We make movies about how we went to war to save the Jews which of course is worse than wrong. It is so wrong that it forces a wrong understanding of American history and American anti-Semitism down the throats of tens of millions of people. If one wants to understand why the US spoke out so little about what happened to the Jews, one has to understand American anti-Semitism as reported by American domestic intelligence to President Roosevelt, similarly as reported to Churchill by British intelligence.

Another point about why it would be interesting not to identify with the victims has to do with how to anticipate genocide. None of the problems that came up from various diplomatic perspectives is about how we can know when it is going to happen. The victims are not the people who understand that. The perpetrators are the people to understand.
that. I am not going to ask that you identify with the perpetrators every day, or that you identify with them ethically or with their ideology. What I will say, however, is that if one is going to anticipate when genocide will happen, the victims’ position is essentially useless, and the perpetrator’s position is extraordinarily helpful. If one always insists on identifying with the victims, on the expense of identifying the perpetrators of the operation, one is not going to have much chance of anticipating genocide.

The same goes with teaching. I think that when you teach the Holocaust from the victim’s position, you are teaching it from the moment when the victim is no longer there. You are not teaching it from the point of view of their lives. In a way, you are objectifying them. You are teaching the Holocaust backward. Once someone is dead you teach it from memory. A lot of Holocaust education then becomes the memory of memory. Then in a strange way, the poor students have never really learnt the facts of the Holocaust. Why? Because the victims, in most cases, do not have a sophisticated understanding of what happened or why. They cannot. They bring us important evidence about the particularities of their cases, and that is extremely important in Holocaust research but we cannot rely on the victims to give us the structure of the events.

When we teach from the victim’s position, we teach memory and history. What worries me about history, however, and here I quote from the program: “how knowledge about the Holocaust can, if possible, help to prevent new episodes of genocide.” If knowledge about the Holocaust is going to help us prevent new episodes of genocide we have to have knowledge about the Holocaust. And I do not think we really do. I think that often the demands of how we teach the Holocaust or what lessons to draw from the Holocaust drives what we say about the Holocaust to the point that I no longer believe that there is a firm understanding of the fundamentals of the Holocaust in popular understanding.

In one of my articles, I write that Auschwitz was later and less important than operation Reinhard, that operation Reinhard was later and less important than the mass-shootings in the occupied Soviet Union - that is absolutely lesson one of the history of the Holocaust and it is not very well understood. Or to put it differently: Zyklon B killed far fewer people than carbon-monoxide, and carbon-monoxide killed far fewer people than bullets – that is the second paragraph in the basic truth about the Holocaust, also not very well understood. Nor is the geography: when Hitler made that important speech in January of 1939 about how, if there would be another world war, the Jews would be annihilated. When he made that speech 98 percent of the Jews were beyond German borders, which make it clear that Hitler was speaking about a war of expansion to kill them. But it also means that the geography of the Holocaust has very little to do with the German Jews who were, in numerical terms, marginal to its course. The geography of the Holocaust is Belarus and the Ukraine and above all Poland. But it was not Poland because people arrived there in trains, again: that is a rather small part of the Holocaust. It was Poland because that is where European Jews lived. The huge majority of Holocaust victims died rather close to where they lived. This business of long train rides and journeys, that is not at all at the center of the Holocaust.

I would submit that historians of Eastern Europe have failed. We have had 20 years and there have not been many good books of historians of Eastern Europe. There are exceptions of course like historian Jan Gross, but for the most part, East European historians have failed
to write about the Holocaust and even more so: the much larger, and more impressive, and probably smarter community of Holocaust historians have not written well about Eastern Europe. We have had 20 years and among the major works not even one has taken on East European sources in East European languages. There are some but they are marginal. The major books, which exist on the Holocaust today, just like 20 years ago, are working with German language sources only. No matter how intelligibly this is done, in my view, this biases the picture and it leaves us with an essentially Cold War-image of the Holocaust which is what we have today.

So what does this say about the text and the context? I am not sure that I can accept the distinction between text and context as it was presented by Professor Bauer. Because when I hear the things about context, they immediately lead me back to the text. Take the two people who were mentioned earlier: Demjanjuk – who is on trial now for being a guard at Sobibor, which probably he was, I don’t know, but Demjanjuk whatever he was at Sobibor or not at Sobibor, he was a Soviet prisoner of war before that. He was a prisoner of the Germans. He was one of five million of whom 3.3 million died. That is the second worst thing the Germans did in the East after the Holocaust. In my opinion, you cannot mention Demjanjuk, without recalling that crime of more than 3 million deaths - I cannot say which one is text and which one is context. Or take the example of the Minsk ghetto, also mentioned by Professor Bauer. Yes, Smolar survived, it was very intelligent. He survived in order to take part in the Stalinization of Poland. He also survived to take part in essentially the warping and the denial of the Holocaust as a historical event in Poland – now, is that text or is it context? It is text in my view.

What that means is that the Holocaust is so tightly connected to the basic trends of Eastern European history and to the Communization of Eastern Europe that one cannot separate them. My modest proposal is that East European historians do a better job, and that Holocaust historians learn an Eastern European language if they do not already know one.

Dr. Jens Kroh:
*Please note that this is a transcript from a taped oral presentation.*

First I would like to dwell on the general political implications of the Stockholm Declaration. It cannot be overestimated in the way it has helped in putting the Holocaust on the agenda of international politics. According to sociologist Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, the Holocaust has become the foundation of official European memory. The peak of this development was in the adoption of January 27 as the International Holocaust Remembrance Day by the United Nation’s General Assembly in 2005.

The second really big political impact of the Stockholm Declaration was that it set the normative tone in the decision of the European Union to end the cooperation with the Austrian government when Jörg Haider’s popular right-wing party came into government in February 2000. It was an unprecedented step for the EU-countries to meddle in the internal affairs of a democratic sovereign European state and can be conceived as the first case in action for the Stockholm Declaration. As we remember today the ten years with the Stockholm Declaration, we can also remember ten years since the diplomatic measures
against Austria. I think, however, that it is doubtful if these measures have led to any decrease of xenophobia and anti-Semitism in Austria or other European countries.

This leads to my third and last point: The Stockholm Declaration marks the beginning of a series of proposals, declarations and resolutions concerning incriminated pasts. It has become a role model. Not only Stalinism and totalitarianism but also Srebrenica and the Armenian genocides have become issues of political deliberation in Europe. The Stockholm Declaration can thus be conceived as a starting point for new political interests to interpret the past and even to emphasize the importance of remembrance.

The Stockholm Declaration is an important step toward the formation of European politics of history, and for the international boom to commemorate negative pasts. Coming to terms with such negative past has almost tuned into an informal criterion for accession to the European Union. This trend, however, also carries with it some risks of ambivalences and dilemmas.

Conflicts may occur when politicians, society leaders and the cultures of memory respectively do not question their own national myth but insist only on other states historic wrongdoings. This might be the reason why historians like Pierre Nora and Ulrich Herbert are concerned by political attempts to legislate historical truths and define how history should be remembered in the future. Whereas Herbert argues that it is the task of the public debate to interpret the past, Nora perceives these political incentives as an attack on the freedom of science.

After having mentioned the viewpoints of some Germans historians, allow me now to conclude with a remark on the German perspective on the connection between politics of history and humanitarian intervention. In 1999, even before the Stockholm Declaration, former German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Joschka Fischer, argued that he has not only learnt “no more war but also no more Auschwitz,” in order to justify the German army’s participation in the NATO-bombings against Serbia. This is a pertinent example of an arbitrary use of the past through which you can legitimize both intervention and non-intervention. That might explain why there is a scientific skepticism in Germany about the use of the past to attain contemporary political goals. This is also why I think that the suitability of National Socialism and the Holocaust as historic arguments and as legitimization for humanitarian interventions in the political discourse is questionable.

**Professor Yehuda Bauer’s closing response to the two panels:**

*Please note that this is a transcript from a taped oral presentation.*

I am glad that I finally met Professor Snyder. I have read all your books and in fact my most recent book deals specifically with what you were asking for, mainly Western Ukraine and Western Belarus.

First of all: do we need another Stockholm Declaration or do we need to change the one we have? No we do not, but we may need to reinterpret it. Text is there in order to be reinterpreted to mean the opposite of what it says. That is what happened to the Bible and
to the American Constitution and to any major text, so if you need some change - reinterpret it!

The other thing is: Ambassador Vraalsen, you hit the nail on the head, when you said that we have international law and institutions and all that while there are continuing genocides. I agree with you that we are not addressing the main thing: We are not addressing the fact that the policies of the major powers prevent intervention where they have interests. Macedonia and Kenya were suggested successful cases of intervention because no major power was interested in them. Sudan is a different case and there are other places like Sudan.

If a situation would develop in Burma, we cannot intervene there, and here I am not even talking about a military-intervention, I am talking about a non-military force. Why can we not intervene? Because there is a major power that owns Burma.

Elinor Hammarskjöld said that we have the institutions. I do not agree. We do not have the institutions, because they do not work! They work when you have a general agreement, but not when you do not.

If I may immodestly quote myself from when I spoke to the General Assembly in the United Nation’s first meeting in 2006 on the International Holocaust Memorial Day: “When I was five years old, my father wrote down everything I said. One day, I was walking with my mother and I said: mother: pretty you are not, but you are mine! – that is what I say about the UN, pretty it is not but it is all we have. It is the best UN that we can imagine. Now to change the UN, it is very, very difficult but it can be done, not tomorrow and not in one year’s time but it can be done.

I find myself in much agreement with most people on the two panels. But I will come back to one crucial element: In my speech earlier, I said that World War II was caused by ideological motivation and that anti-Semitism was a central element in that ideology. 35 million people died in World War II, in Europe alone. Close to six millions were Jews but 29 million were not Jewish. They died because of anti-Semitism. That is why I agree with you that anti-Semitism is a crucial element in this. Not just in Europe by the way - we happen to be in Europe right now but there are three universities in China teaching the Holocaust. Why do they teach the Holocaust? Because the Holocaust is the symbol that connects with 300 000 Chinese who were murdered by the Imperial Japanese Army in Nanjing in 1937. The work of the ITF is at the same time very specific and very universal.