

The 1952 German-Jewish Settlement and Beyond

New Perspectives on Reparations
During and After the Cold War

Workshop

Vienna, 9–10 October 2023

Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI)
Rabensteig 3, 1010 Vienna, Research Lounge, 3rd Floor



German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett signing the Luxembourg Agreement regarding the provision of reparations and compensations on 10 September 1952.

ORGANISED BY

WIENER WIESENTHAL INSTITUT
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On 10 September 1952, the Federal Republic of Germany, the State of Israel, and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany signed a historic agreement in Luxembourg, according to which Germany was to pay Israel the costs for “the heavy burden of resettling so great a number of uprooted and destitute Jewish refugees from Germany and from territories formerly under German rule”. The settlement also included a supplement in which West Germany acknowledged the right of victims of National Socialism to claim personal compensation for deprivation of liberty, losses of livelihood, and property resulting from Nazi persecution. The Luxembourg agreement comprised a turning point in the relationship between Germans and Jews. It turned former perpetrators and past victims into partners in negotiations, melding antagonistic narratives into a core of shared history from which both sides could benefit.

Since the German Democratic Republic (GDR) ignored Jewish reparation demands, both Israel and the Claims Conference adjusted their claims to reflect the division of Germany into two independent states. West Germany was content not to take full liability for the past, although it still considered itself as the sole heir of the German Reich and the only legitimate representative of the German nation. In the settlement that was signed in Luxembourg, West Germany agreed to pay its debt in proportion to the size of the pre-1937 German Reich, thus leaving open the question of future restitutions from the GDR. No less complicated was the question of German reparations to countries, as well as to victims of National Socialism who now lived behind the Iron Curtain. Compared to other areas of German reparations, Central and Eastern Europe reparations were less examined. Ensuing German unification, a new wave

of compensation and restitution to victims of National Socialism followed, including reparation demands from Eastern European states. These claims were late follow-ups to the incomplete measures taken in the years immediately following the war to restore property and make amends to those persecuted under National Socialism. Yet claims for restitution were now also made against Eastern European countries, challenging them to come to terms with their own troubled past. One example of this development was the Washington Agreement on the settlement of questions concerning compensation and restitution for Nazi victims signed between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the United States in 1994. Another one is the 2009 Terezin Declaration issued by 47 countries, agreeing on measures to right economic wrongs against Jews and other victims of Nazi persecution in Europe.

The aim of this workshop is to shed light on and discuss previously underexposed chapters of the history of reparations and restitution in Central and Eastern Europe during and after the Cold War, taking the Luxembourg Agreement as a starting point.

Monday, 9 October 2023

12:00 **Welcome Notes**

Jochen BÖHLER

(Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies – VWI)

Gideon REUVENI

(Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies, University of Sussex – US)

KEYNOTE

Chair: **Éva KOVÁCS**

(VWI)

12:15 **Elazar BARKAN** (Columbia University)

Atonement, Reparations and Historical Dialogue

PANEL 1

LOOKING AT THE GERMAN-JEWISH SETTLEMENT FROM THE COLD WAR PERSPECTIVE

Chair: **Daniel SIEMENS**

(University of Newcastle)

13:15 **Lorena DE VITA** (Utrecht University)

*Criticising the Wiedergutmachung: East Germany's Narratives
for National and International Audiences*

13:35 **Maya MARK** (Ben Gurion University)

*A Tale of Two Oppositions: The Liberal Right and the Socialist Left
against the Reparations Agreement*

13:55 *Discussion*

14:15 *Coffee and Snack Break*

PANEL 2

MONEY AND MEMORY DURING THE COLD WAR

Chair: **Markus FEURSTEIN**

(Claims Conference)

15:00 **Iris NACHUM** (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

*Cold War and Compensation: Thoughts on the Nexus Between
Memory and Property*

15:20 **Daniel SIEMENS** (University of Newcastle)

*Reparations and Oil: British Diplomats on the Geopolitical
Dimension of the Luxembourg Agreement of 1952*

15:40 *Discussion*

16:00 *Coffee Break*

PANEL 3
GERMAN REPARATION AND THE IRON CURTAIN (I):
THE CASE OF ROMANIA

Chair: Constantin IORDACHI
(Central European University / VWI)

16:15 **Olga STEFAN** (Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași)
Reparations for Survivors of the Camp of Death: Vapniarka as a Case Study

16:35 **Ștefan Cristian IONESCU** (Northwestern University, IL, USA)
Compensations for Jewish Survivors in Early Post-Holocaust Romania

16:55 *Discussion*

17:30 **SCREENING OF THE FILM RECKONINGS FOLLOWED BY A DISCUSSION WITH DIRECTOR ROBERTA GROSSMANN**

Chair: Gideon REUVENI

(Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies, US)

CineCenter, Fleischmarkt 6, 1010 Wien

20:00 *Dinner*

Tuesday, 10 October 2023

9:00 **GUIDED TOUR IN THE SIMON WIESENTHAL ARCHIVE**

Kinga FROJIMOVICS (VWI)

The Wiesenthal Correspondence on Reparation

PANEL 4
GERMAN REPARATION AND THE IRON CURTAIN (II):
HUNGARY AND YUGOSLAVIA

Chair: Éva KOVÁCS
(VWI)

10:00 **Borbála KLAGSMANN** (University College Dublin)
Squeezing Water from a Stone? West German Restitution for Hungarian Survivors

10:20 **Máté ZOMBORY** (ELTE University, Budapest)
The Politics of Historical Documentation: The Cold War and the Hungarian Reparations Claims in West Germany

10:40 **Ana Ćirić PAVLOVIĆ** (ELTE University, Budapest)
Revisiting the Tito-Brandt Gentlemen's Agreement: Kapitalhilfe instead of Reparations to Yugoslavia and Israeli-Yugoslav Jews

11:00 *Discussion*

11:20 *Coffee Break*

PANEL 5
CHALLENGES AND LEGACIES OF THE 1952
GERMAN-JEWISH SETTLEMENT

Chair: Iris NACHUM

(The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

11:40 **Katrin STEFFEN** (US)
Never Ending Story: Poland and the Question(s) of Reparations during the 1950s and post 1989

12:00 **Dani KRANZ** (Ben Gurion University)
Unplanned Long-Term Effects of the Luxembourg Agreement: Jewish Migration to Germany, Israeli Migration, and Naturalisation

12:20 *Discussion*

12:40 *Lunch Break*

PANEL 6
THE FALL OF THE IRON CURTAIN AND AUSTRIA'S
WAY TO THE WASHINGTON AGREEMENT

Chair: Philipp ROHRBACH

(VWI)

13:40 **Brigitte BAILER**
(Documentation Center of Austrian Resistance / University of Vienna)
The Special Case of Austria: Only Last Measures of Restitution and Indemnification after 1989

14:00 **Nicole L. IMMLER** (Utrecht University)
The Afterlife of Restitution: A Perception Study of the General Settlement Funds' Practices

14:20 *Discussion*

14:40 **CLOSING REMARKS**

Éva KOVÁCS (VWI)

Gideon REUVENI (Weidenfeld Institute of Jewish Studies, US)

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on the basis of a decision
of the Bundestag

CONCEPT

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Due to limited number of places, we kindly ask you to register at anmeldung@wvi.ac.at
by 2 October 2023. We will confirm your participation via e-mail.

Image: 1952 Bundesregierung / Bundesbildstelle.

By participating in this event, you consent to the publication of photos, video and audio recordings that are made during the event.