

Transcript of the *Shoah* Interview of a course at Yad Vashem

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YAD-VA-SHEM 1

Course at YAD-VA-SHEM

(Course-debate by a professor in front of an assembly
of military students after showing a film.)

Simultaneous translation

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YAD-VA-SHEM 1 Professor - Well, we see this film and we also determined that nobody of
you, the subject of the Holocaust is new to me, and for this reason I
would like to pose a certain number of questions, or rather, I want to let
you pose the questions that concern you, that interest you.

Lets begin.

Does anybody have thoughts to express after having seen the film that has
just been shown to you?

(The tape malfunctions.)

Are there any questions you would like to ask?

(Interjection by LANZMANN very quietly: "Continue even if I am near
the camera.")

A student – One of the things that bother me after this film are the
relationships between us, the Israeli youth, and also the State of Israel and
the State of today's Germany.

Professor – Thus, are you concerned are you particularly interested in
the relationships between the German youths and the Israeli youth or
between the German state and the Israeli state?

Student – I am particularly interested in the questions regarding the
relations between the countries.

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Professor – I may want to answer you in a little while because I would first like to clarify a certain number of problems which I find specific with regard to the Holocaust; because I am convinced that the the question regarding the relationship between us and Germany is a consequence of our attitude.

Student – We have already seen a certain number of films; each time that we see a new film there are certain questions that arise again, particularly the question about the attitude of the Jews who were facing death, who found themselves in front of the trucks into which they were to be loaded. It seems that one cannot avoid the question: why did they not try to defend themselves, to resist?

Professor – OK, this concerns the question of passivity. On this subject I have personally a question, and this is a question that concerns us in the same manner – the majority of you are young people, graduates of high schools; to this day the Holocaust has not been assigned as a compulsory course in the program for the baccalaureate and thus nobody has had to confront this subject.

Student – Under the new method one had to study some pages on the Holocaust, some aspects.

Professor – You, what school do you come from?

Student – A school in Rholo, in the city of Rholo.

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Professor – Good, I had personally not heard about it, but in Israel in general this has not been in a compulsory program.

As far as I am aware of, those who have taught about the Holocaust have done so in an apologetic manner, i.e., the studies were in general about the subject of resistance, revolt, clandestine resistance, all this in order to try to explain and prove only the idea of those people who were taken like a herd to the slaughter house. Is that not so? It has even be said that it is not true that the Jews were lambs, and the proof is in the revolt in the ghetto of Warsaw and by adding other revolts of Bialystok and – at that time there was Vilna – and then coming back to the revolt in the Warsaw ghetto.

So, after so many years of justification, self-justification, the sole presentation of the Jewish self-defense, is this question – considering that the Jews were like lambs in the slaughter house – is this question the one which worries the young people and is this the reason that I myself pose the question: Who is concerned with this question?

Still, today, after so many years during which efforts were made correctly to destroy that image by showing an image of a Jew who defends himself and hits back; who is still concerned with this problem?

Ah, I can see, because finally only very few hands are raised,

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that our education has in fact been effective; I don't want to judge this on the spot to know if it has been justified or not, but in any case, our educational method has been effective.

Student – I have to say that this is for me personally the first time that I have heard this problem presented in this manner. I do not think that the problem is in first place: have the Jews defended themselves or not? It is necessary to know that the majority of the six million who have been murdered have not revolted. The Warsaw ghetto was a small minority, it was not the center. The question of defense, of self-defense was not the problem for the majority. The majority were people who were led to the slaughterhouse like lambs.

Professor – Good, if I understand right, you are concerned with this question? Or, if, on the contrary, it seems to you so evident because the situation appears clear, the situation of occupied Europe? Are you telling me that this question concerns you?

Student – I think this is a very hard question, a very deep question.

Other student – Certainly, this question concerns me, but the problem is to know if the fact that one speaks of it and deals with this question can lead to something positive. Is this generally worthwhile? After viewing a film of this type, I believe that the first question that comes to mind is: is it possible that such things could happen again?

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Is it possible that in the world that we live in and that shows us phenomena of this type, is it possible that such events could be reproduced? There are some who think that all that which existed during the time of the Holocaust could never be reproduced again, and, for example, in the United States, there are certain places where they state that the events could have been reproduced.

One also could ask the question: what to do to resolve the problem?

Professor – Yes, would you like to say something?

Another student – In light of what he has said, I understand his reaction, which is: let's first of all forget the past; let's not talk anymore about the past; this is enough; this is in the past. What one has to do now is to deal with the present. However, I do not agree; I think that the past (*end of image*) is something very important; it is necessary to fully understand what has been in order to be better able to even understand the present. Concerning the revolt in the Warsaw ghetto, I know of a number of questions, at least two events, two cases of revolt in the concentration camps.

Professor – Well, it is true that I had been a little cynical when I talked about our education which essentially mentions the revolts by organization,

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cases where Jews were revolting, but that was voluntary. I have said that in our education, to the extent that it occupied itself with the discussion of holocausts, has put the emphasis on Jewish self-defense. For this reason I have asked: should the education be condemned where this exact point is stressed? I wanted to know if this question still concerns you, this concern about the lambs in the slaughter house, or, after 35 years, this problem has ceased to interest you and that you have other questions? For example, our friend in the back posed a question, a problem: can this recur again? I would like to ask him a question: what was your exact intention in asking this question? I would first like to dismiss and categorize all questions. Well, first the attitude of the Jews: how did the Jews behave themselves? Do you have another question? Is this something that can recur? And here I would like to ask you the question..... What would you like to say? Would you like to ask the question: can the Holocaust recur, anywhere in the world for any people, or is your question to know if this is something that can recur with regard to the Jewish people?

Student – I would ask, for example, this question of the Jews

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who returned to settle in Germany or the Jews who were in America and who have not come to settle in Israel. This also makes me ask the question: all the Jews who did not come to settle in Israel, – this is perhaps a slightly extreme question – don't they risk to be exterminated? Well, here is my question.

Professor – Well, we shall soon discuss this question.

Student – I would like to now pose another question which might complement his question. When Jews came to settle in Israel, it was with the idea that this could not recur here, i.e., Jews could be exterminated in Europe or elsewhere, but not here.

But finally, since the 6-day war we know that this could happen here too, in Israel, just as in South Vietnam where one can see that a genocide was possible, however, within a country. However, the problem is also that there is a difference between the fact of being exterminated here and the fact of being exterminated abroad, in exile. The difference is possibly not so much of the scheme ... the physical scheme, but, e.g., from my point of view, the fact of being assassinated here or there, according to the physical scheme, that is not important, but the fact that people continue

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to live there in Germany, that Germany which only a short time ago was the Nazi Germany, that Germany, that Jews are still willing to live there, that, that is what worries me: how are Jews ready for that?

With regard to the problem of lambs in the slaughterhouse, I think that the problem that is of most interest to us, this is a quest....., a problem that worries us in Israel, because the power of the Jews abroad is a power of money and not having any money tomorrow, while we here are not worrying about that question. So, I don't think that it is absolutely necessary to search for an answer to all the questions. We will never be able to comprehend that question about the lambs being led to the slaughter house and though that does not mean the question should not be asked but it is also necessary

(The tape rolls without sound for a long interval)

YAD-VA-SHEM 2 Another student – I think that nobody can come to help us. It's up to us and up to us alone to do everything if we want to be saved. As long as entire nations are given over to the clutches of the wicked, I think that in such a case too, if we don't try to defend ourselves, nobody can help us, we would have no chance.

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Professor – I can see that this is a most essential point. I can see that the central question that concerns you is the future, or the present and the future, and we always learn from comparisons with the past what we can do in the future.

And I believe that the question which we have to ask now is: (*end of image*) the possibility of another Holocaust? Do we consider it as a universal subject, i.e., could something like that which has occurred once in the universe, could such an event recur tomorrow for another people, for us too, or do you consider yourself here as belonging to a people, the Jewish people? For whom these problems, this difficulty will chase them, continue to exist, and a people which will remain a victim in a special manner? That means that in a certain way I want that you remain vigilant and that you account for a very important point: we have settled in in our country, a Jewish country, the state of Israel and if I consider the past, if I consider the vision of the Zionist world, the Zionist ideology, Zionism has come to solve questions, answer questions, agitate, and one might ask the question: if Zionism has succeeded in doing that, i.e., that we, today, are settled in a Jewish state and we still fight among ourselves...

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we still struggle to find out how one conducts himself towards us.
 However, the difference today is that I have a uniform, “phantoms”, tanks.
 Or is our reflection purely an intellectual thought, is it the fact that our
 struggle is not real, does not concern a real danger at our doors?
certain things.....

YAD-VA-SHEM 3 Zionism has finally resolved a part of the questions which we would have asked ourselves in the future and I believe that by facing the problems of the Holocaust in a very real fashion, I would ask the question in an almost mathematical manner; there is a formula which has been expressed a moment ago through the question of one of our friends sitting....., in the back, and this formula says more or less: the Diaspora equals the Holocaust – Jews will continue to reside in the Diaspora and if they stay, the Holocaust will await them. Why? because the Jewish idea wants that the Jews do not have their place in the Diaspora, that the Jewish people will always be strangers in exile and that for this reason Zionism had already asked these questions, years before the Holocaust. Thus, I don’t think that it is necessary that it might be necessary to place the emphasis just on the catastrophic vision catastrophic events.

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I believe that if someone had told us that the solution would be a Jewish state, a Jewish sovereignty; today, you who are settled in this state solution and who continue to ask yourselves the same questions and to speak with these ancient ideas: “what do they want to make of us?” Finally, in spite of this solution presented by the State, do we still reflect on the same questions which concerned us before the Holocaust? And if one speaks of Holocaust, a Holocaust which could affect us even here? In other words, are we speaking of the significance of the Holocaust? Is the problem of the Holocaust also our problem today or – what can we say – the problem of the Holocaust is the problem of the Jews in the Diaspora? One could even say that this is a universal problem, in general, which can recur for any people and not only for our people? However, within the Jewish leadership two more questions arise: is this a Jewish problem which continues even today to present itself to the Jewish state and can we be the victims of this phenomenon and should we now face this problem? Or, is this problem of the Holocaust the problem of the Jews in the Diaspora? And what could be the solution? Now, I myself, I am concerned with the question, I can go and say to the Jews in Los Angeles, to the Jews in Paris: you know, I am in Zion, in Israel, in the stillness, in

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the tranquility; I have problems with the Arabs, sure, but the Jewish problems I have resolved here.

I consider the idea of the Holocaust as the expression of the most poignant point, of the most critical of the Jewish question.

This is my idea of the Holocaust.

Student – Now, if there is another war, and as we are too hasty in this war, is it possible or not to have another Holocaust?

Professor – The problem, as I see it, is: is the war in the Middle East simply a problem of quest....., of international conflict or is it a Jewish problem?

Soldier's question – I think that the state of Israel represents the Jewish people and, consequently, if there is a war and we are exterminated here, this could be called a Holocaust.

Professor – I, myself do not want to think of the Holocaust as equivalent to death. For me the Holocaust was the ultimate state of death, but within the framework of the Jewish question. You will see a Jewish question. But if we have time, we will put ourselves a little bit into this..... into these questions.

The Holocaust developed in stages, because what did happen in Germany in the end? What was the content of the Nazi ideology? The Nazi ideology came to resolve the Jewish question and the relevant factor was:

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solving the Jewish question. What was the response to this question: solve the Jewish question once and for all, this there were several possible responses, i.e., emigration; even though the subject is the Holocaust, I do not want to simply consider the ultimate stage, i.e., death, but want to consider the Holocaust as the ultimate outcome, the height of the Jewish destiny. This is the reason that the answer to this question will tell us if the Holocaust is pertinent only for the Diaspora and that we are beyond that question, that we speak of the question but that our problems are different, problems with the Arabs, with internal problems, but, in any case, our problems are really not any more the traditional problems of the Jewish people.

A student – I would like to bring up a very different problem. We have always said when talking about the Holocaust, we always have asked the question: why did the world do nothing? where was the whole world when this took place?

What is taking place now, at this time, I am accountable for what goes on in the state of Israel – I live in Israel – and I am aware that in the whole world

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the reactions are the same, for example, what happens in Bangladesh or in other places; the world is reacting in the same manner and it appears that one can ask a moral question and perhaps understand the problem of the Holocaust by asking ourselves the question: where are we when one speaks of the world that kills itself?

It is equally possible today to speak of the state of Israel: where are we, state of Israel, when other things take place in the world?

Professor – I would like to come back to the problem of the lambs in the slaughter house. Is this a problem that concerns us here? I would like to ask the question in a brutal manner: considering the fact that we have been a victimized people, do you think that this now means we should be more moral?

A student – At any rate more sensitive.

Professor – Do we have any obligations due to that?

Student – I don't think that this is the case. The problem is not just because we are, we have to be more moral or not, the problem is ... Is this really a moral question just to know if the world could and had to be quiet at that time?

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Professor – Well then, you would do better posing the question in another manner; you think that because this was done to the Jewish people, does it have to make us more sensitive?

Student – Don't forget, we have also been quiet when the world continues to act in the same way it has behaved itself towards us at that time.

Professor – So, what do you suggest?

Student – Well, I propose that we help if these things happen in Biafra, and well, we have to send our army, help the people of Biafra.

Professor – Well, if I understand alright, you are making a type of intellectual analysis, perhaps you don't want to commit yourself too much, but I ask you how to be human: do you consider yourself obligated to act because of that or not? You are asking yourself the question, you say to yourself: this is how the nations conduct themselves and thus, I myself don't have to act in a different manner from the nation.

Student – Yes.

Another student – I don't know, a type of impression we have learned, as you said, a certain teaching style in high school; one is always asking themselves the question: where were all of them? But also, there is a new development in our reception and we are thinking of the world. We are shown very beautiful pictures of refugee ships from Vietnam.

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One can see dying people on television; one speaks of it during simple evening conversations, but the question: can one understand why the Holocaust has taken place? Because, in the end, the world conducted itself at the time just as we are conducting ourselves today; the world had its political considerations; it's not that the world was not concerned with the question, but it was unable to do something due to the prevailing situation.

Another student – I don't think that this is so difficult as questions go. I think that we are here at the limit of our possibilities. It should be said first that refugees were welcomed in certain places, i.e., the United States. The United States can permit itself..... can permit itself, perhaps, to not conduct war and to intervene, but, in any case, to receive refugees. And as certain people rather try to look inward and do nothing, it is certain that this is a mistake.

Another student – But the the real question is: to what extent is help possible? If the question is: how to help and in what direction? I believe that the question is totally bureaucratic; it concerns generals, diplomats. I believe that the question is as follows: is this a moral or a normative question? Is it I, coming from a people victimized in a type of Holocaust,

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do I consider myself morally obligated to be more sensitive to a subject of this type? I personally? Or do I think that – as one says that brother will turn against brother – (*end of image*) and that the countries conduct themselves in a certain manner, do I continue to conduct myself like other people? I don't believe that because something has happened, I have to continue.

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A student – I think that if one finds oneself under fire in combat and because one is obligated to consider the survival of women and children, I believe that on the battlefield it is it can be very negative for the combat because there is proof of what has taken place at the moment of “operation litany.” We have tried to avoid touching the population of women and children and then, suddenly, we realized that lads of 13 came out of of the riflemen and tried to hurt us.

Another student – I think that some cannot accept the argument that he provided for education which I personally have received..... all the arguments which they gave out of necessity, and that one has no choice, one cannot always take children into consideration, I don't think that these arguments are valid. For me it may be difficult to

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express myself, but my problem is the necessity of vengeance. I believe that due to these arguments there are war criminals.

And that is the reason that the state of Israel and the army of Israel have to try to not be like all the other nations, particularly the “Zahal,” the army of Israel. We have always stressed the purity of the weapons and I believe that it is necessary to continue stressing these values.

Professor – OK, you think that our attitude in the Israeli army has to be, in a direct line, a consequence of the Holocaust?

Yes, is there still anyone who has not spoken?

A student – Yes, I, and I would like to come back to the problem of the purity of the weapons and our attitude towards the Holocaust. The Holocaust is a long way away from us and still it still hits us today. We have had so many wars in this country that it seems to me that our wars have hit us quite a bit more than the Holocaust.

Professor – I think that our experience with resistance, the experience about which we were educated, have the effect that we don't have a need today, at least that is what you said, to recall the remembrance of past events.

Student – Yes, this is exactly what I am saying.

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Professor – Well, now I have a very important question: what is the attitude, your attitude, toward the victims of the Holocaust? Are they our brothers, our family? Are we survivors of the Holocaust? Do you consider yourself a survivor of the Holocaust? Is there anyone here who has thought about that notion of survivor of the Holocaust? – This is possibly a more extensive idea than the one we take generally as currently acceptable – do you yourself consider yourself as Holocaust survivors?

Student – No, I don't consider myself a survivor because if so, all Jews who are here now, in this country as well as in the Diaspora, might be survivors of the Holocaust.

No, however, I don't consider myself a survivor because if so, all have to be survivors.

Yes, I am a survivor and everybody is, or I am not and nobody is.

Professor – Well, the question is: because we deal mainly with the destiny of our country, let's say, personally, I did not construct this country by putting brick on brick, but because I use the expres(sion)... the "we" and because I say "we", "we have built this country," this "we" is in reality a communal "we."

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Professor – When I say: do “you” consider yourself a survivor, I.... I.... put myself at the point of view of the collective.

Still another student – I cannot consider myself a real survivor of the Holocaust. Perhaps my people, but not I.

And another student – Concerning this subject, I also do not consider myself a survivor.....directly of the Holocaust, but I believe that it is because of the Holocaust that I live in this country and this is my connection to the Holocaust. Each time that I participate in ceremonies of.... of remembrance, first in school and today in the army, regardless of circumstances, I have – little by little – come to consider that the sentimental point of view plays no role but that it is very important because six million Jews have been exterminated and I don’t believe that the fact that they are Jews is fundamental – six million people have been exterminated – and certainly, we are more concerned because it concerned Jews; but the only bond that I personally feel with these six million Jews is that it is because of the Holocaust that I am settled here. I believe that the Balfour declaration and other (éléments) other documents of that type have provoked the Holocaust.

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Still another student – I would now like to ask a more objective question, a question which Jews sometimes don't ask themselves: what is so special about the Jews, the Jews in Israel and in the Holocaust – the fact that six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust, whereas ten million Russians were killed and Poles, others – what is so special when for the other peoples there are in numbers perhaps many more victims than for us?

Professor – Well, if I understand correctly, the question is about knowing why you differentiate between the six million Jews, the millions of Russians, Poles, Belgians, French who died during that same span of time where many of which many were killed in the same manner? Why is the emphasis on the Jewish question?

A student – I would like to respond to two things, to your reaction and to mine. When we were.... when you told us right now that the Holocaust is the height of the Jewish question, well, I as Jew consider myself part of the Jewish problem and though concerned by the Holocaust and, as has already been said, the state of Israel was a direct consequence of the Holocaust, since all the Jews of the world were convinced by this argument when they asked the question:

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why Zionism? And now, as far as the Jewish problem is concerned, why put aside the questions about Jews in the Holocaust? First of all, because we have had differences in scope, and particularly the extermination has been systematic, which it was not for the other people; this has not particularly in the history of the Belgians or other people, that was never a problem which appeared simply in the course of their history, while for us, from the time of the destruction of the first Temple, and up to our time, the problem has always been our problem.

A student – No, but my question is, for example: Why is there so much emphasis on the Holocaust and not, for example, on the inquisition and others?

Other student – Perhaps because we have living among us survivors of the Holocaust who live besides us. Always, where the question concerns Poles, Russians and others ... and the other people who are not Jewish, they were not killed with the aim of extermination as it was done to us. For the Jews that was really the aim of their aim. The idea of the destruction of the Jews was founded on a racial theory, an inferior race. Now, concerning my identification or the identification of my friends with the Holocaust, I believe the problem was defined by Eichmann – if one kills 1000 people, this is something horrible,

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if one kills 10,000 people, that is...a catastrophe, but if one kills millions, now that killing is no longer a question of numbers. I think that this theory can well explain what has happened. In another fifty years there will be only films, history books and and I think that there is something much older in that question; it is said that each of us should think of himself as if he had come out of Egypt; I believe that in the same manner, each of us should consider themselves as if he were himself a survivor of the Holocaust.

Professor – So, you think that there is significance in the fact that you now live in a Jewish state in which ... in which you risk dying because you are Jewish? All that after the Holocaust?

Student – Yes, it is.

The student – But this is because we are Jews here.

Professor – Oh! You think that there is no connection?

The student – No. If ... if next door my neighbors were Yugoslav and not Arabs, and if I bothered them, I think that they would also start war against me. I think that this is the way to look at the Israeli-Arab conflict. It is a conflict of neighbors and has no connection to the Jewish question.

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Professor – Oh, good, it is not necessary to make any connection, any relationship between the two things, but still there are people who have made that connection.

The student – Between the Holocaust and the establishment of the state, the fact that I am settled here? and I was told that there was a direct correlation with the Holocaust? Well, I think that there is no personal link between the ... the Zionist effort to create a state and the Holocaust. The Holocaust may have given it a little shove, but nothing more.....

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The student – There are some who don't see any connection between the fact that we are Jews and the Holocaust, but do they consider that there is a connection between this fact and a possible second Holocaust?

Professor – What is your question? Could you state it more clearly? I don't think that you expressed it well; it is not very clear.

Student – Don't we consider that there is that there exists a connection between the fact that we are Jews, that is, don't we see a connection between us

Professor –Oh, yes, yes this is a good question ... do we, on the one hand, make a difference between what happens to us here and the Jewish

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question, which means that our problem is a problem of two peoples who live fighting each other to try to conquer the same little piece of earth or that the territorial conflict essentially has nothing to do with the problem of life or death? A fundamental and basic question?

It is possible that this question is of no interest, but I have been asked to pose a question to you: How many of you are direct descendants of survivors?

(Intervention by Lanzman, very quietly, most likely when seeing the number of raised hands).

Lanzman – look at this!! By the bundle!

Let them leave their hands up.

(The interpreter translates to the assistant.

Big stir while it seems that hands are counted and all talk at the same time).

Professor – Another question. We will begin to recap all the questions which I find interesting. What is your attitude towards the fact that today Israel is the only place where Jews, that means what one thinks, where Jews can die as a consequence of a violent death because of war? Does this question resound with you? Do you agree with the presentation of the question in this manner?

A student – I think that this has no comparison to the Holocaust at all.

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All this time you have asked the question emphasizing the fact that the Holocaust is not just the consequence of a Holocaust war, it is that people have been exterminated without a state of war, without a reason given by the war and you have asked the question if we could identify with the war... no, with the Holocaust, yes, later on in our wars in the state of Israel, can we identify with that? But we will never be able to do that because a situation like this will never recur here or, should an approximately comparable situation occur, it would be within the framework of a war, in any case never under the conditions which existed at another time. Now, you just asked the question if anybody felt individual responsibility on a moral plain of the attitude of the country? And I can state that I, although my parents are not survivors of the Holocaust, and my grandparents are not survivors, I feel the suffering, I feel the anger, I feel that I want to do something to change this, I have a lot of rights.....

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(continued)

... I feel the anger, I feel that I want to do something to change this, I have

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a lot of rights towards many people, towards many peoples, but as he has just said, nothing can be done; every country sits in front of its television set in the evening to look at the events. I think that the only influence, for example, that Israel can have in its attitude towards the survivors from Vietnam originate from the Holocaust. The fact that we were prepared to integrate refugees, I think this is an immediate consequence of the Holocaust, and that we have drawn lessons from the Holocaust.

Another student – As far as this question is concerned, I'd like to say ... I'd like to respond that Israel is not the only country where Jews can succumb to a violent death and if, one day, the Jews here die of a violent death, it is not because they are Jews, but because of the conflicts which are taking place in the region and of which we have already spoken.

Still another student – I think that this question is a provocative question. Here is a man coming from the outside who sees a group of people in uniform and ... he sees these men as destined to be killed because, as soldiers they risk being in a battle and die. But I don't think that it is necessary to deal here with extreme cases

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or even the case of Argentina or other countries where there is violence, but one can simply take the the example of the United States where anti-Semitism is so strong, in a way that nobody can promise me that there will not be a pogrom tomorrow morning and that, if Syria decides suddenly to let a Hitler rise among them, there would not be a type of Holocaust in the Nazi fashion here? And at that moment, he would already have all the cards in his hands.

And another student – Regarding to what has been said concerning the possibilities that a pogrom could not happen, or an event ... a violent event in the middle of Boston or some other place, I would like to say that when Hitler rose in Germany it was not under indifferent conditions, it was not as if someone suddenly could come and shoot up suddenly in Boston. I believe that the economic conditions in Germany at that time permitted Hitler to assume power. These conditions do not exist in the United States, at least that is what I think.

Now, to the question he has asked: violent death; someone said that it is possible to encounter violence, violent death, just as much in the Diaspora than here; the problem is, from which point of view that you see this; for example, for me, I can struggle here, fight, die in a most violent fashion as if I had been assassinated.

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I can die there also in the same manner, but the object is different. Here I make a certain contribution of my whole being, that means that I have struggled, I have fought because someone tried to attack me and I defended myself. I am Israeli; and as Israeli I defend myself, because of the simple fact that being settled here has the effect that I have a conflict with the Arabs, and in the end, the history of the Holocaust does not concern me directly. One of the most obvious reasons to those who have settled here because of the Holocaust is, that they are Jews first of all and subsequently Israeli, that means that there are two superimposed problems, the Jewish problem and the Israeli problem.

Still another student – Concerning what he said at the beginning regarding the conditions of Hitler's rise to power, I would just like to state that what you say now that such a thing could not recur... arise, well, that is exactly what the Jews said at the time, that when Hitler rose to power they continued to say: "no, this can't go on," and I believe that the same thing could happen today, because the Jews in the United States continue to say that this could never happen when in fact, here, nobody ever said that.....

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there will be no more wars, that we are done with wars; even after the six-day war, nobody said that there would be no more wars here and I believe that we will continue to be strong and tenacious here because we know that a war can always recur, even regarding the very question of my settlement here, in this country, the faith I have in this country is the source of heroism of all soldiers, of all the people who commit themselves here, in the Israeli army, while that what my friend said regarding the United States is very different.

Professor – I would like to ask you three answers, the three last answers, regarding the three last interventions; then I will conclude. I have asked you to sum up your questions to then give me a chance to give you an overall view.

YES? ...

A student – I would like to respond to your question. I think that it is very, very nice to say that here we can die only of a violent death in our self-defense, but say nothing is important concerning the fact that we have a connection with the United States in our birth, I think that this is not true.

Another student – Judaism in the United States, which has also good reasons not only Judaism,

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but the United States are at risk of abandoning us just as they abandoned Vietnam because of internal problems or because of all the fallen soldiers. Now, it is quite possible that, if the United States would get cold feet, there is a risk that they will abandon us. And I think that we have just one power: that is the Judaism of the United States. And if by unfortunate circumstances something would happen to the Judaism of the United States, this would be just as serious as if something would happen here; oh, sure, our death would be violent, but at least for a cause.

Professor – I am not quite sure what you wanted to say.

The student – What I wanted to say is that the problem of dying a violent death has in the end no significance; it provides no chance of living.

Professor – Well, you, you have not yet said anything.

The student to whom he spoke – I think that the aim is not to die, but to live. If one speaks of dying, this is dying to assure the continuation of Jewish life here. This is not dying for dying, and I believe that the problem here is that the people here have severed all ties to the Jewish people

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in the Diaspora, but in fact, one has to know that the majority of Jewish people are not here in Israel, but in the rest of the Diaspora.

Professor – Well, let's end this.

(Bustling in the room; everybody gets up.)

The professor speaks in Hebrew in front of the monument of Rappoport, without translation.

END

of YAD-VA-SHEM