Part II
Reparations and the Holocaust
The Claims Conference and the Historic Jewish Efforts for Holocaust-Related Compensation and Restitution

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A. Introduction

When the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany was founded by 23 international Jewish organizations in 1951, the name was chosen very deliberately. The founders wanted to make clear to Germany and the rest of the world that while they expected compensation and restitution from the perpetrators of the Holocaust and those who abetted the Nazis, the moral issues arising from the Holocaust could not be resolved through negotiations.

The mission of the Claims Conference has always been to secure what it considers a small measure of justice for Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. It has pursued this goal through a combination of negotiations, disbursing funds to individuals and organizations, and seeking the return of Jewish property lost during the Holocaust. Over the past five decades, the Claims Conference has:

– Negotiated for compensation for injuries inflicted upon individual Jewish victims of Nazi persecution;
– Negotiated for the return of and restitution for Jewish-owned properties and assets confiscated or destroyed by the Nazis;
– Obtained funds for the relief, rehabilitation and resettlement of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution, and aided in rebuilding Jewish communities and institutions devastated by the Nazis;
– Administered individual compensation programmes for Shoah survivors;
– Recovered unclaimed East German Jewish property and allocated the proceeds from their sale to institutions that provide social services to elderly,

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