

## **Episode 39: Transgenerational Trauma and the Holocaust**

**Guest:** Dr. Yael Danieli, Senior Representative to the United Nations of the World Federation for Mental Health

**Hosts:** Alexandria, Efe, Mert

**Bio:** Dr. Yael Danieli is a world-renowned clinical psychologist and trauma expert who has dedicated her life to understanding the human impact of the Holocaust and its transmission across generations. She co-founded the Group Project for Holocaust Survivors and their Children, establishing the world's first psychological care program for Holocaust survivors, and in 2014 founded the International Center for the Study, Prevention and Treatment of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma. Creator of the Danieli Inventory for Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma, she has pioneered research on inherited trauma across cultures. Dr. Danieli has also profoundly shaped international law as a trailblazing victimologist, advising the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, all major genocide tribunals, and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She is the only living person that has helped establish all existing victims' rights in international law. Her historic contributions have brought healing, justice, and understanding to countless individuals and societies affected by mass violence worldwide. In 2021 she received the Human Rights Leadership Award from the New York City Manhattan Borough President and the Arts4allFoundation.

**In this Episode:** In this extraordinary episode, Alexandria, Efe, and Mert engage in a long deep-dive with Dr. Yael Danieli, a living legend in trauma studies and international justice. Recorded in Berlin during the year marking the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the discussion weaves together personal history, professional insight, and global perspective. Dr. Danieli recalls growing up in British Mandate Palestine, witnessing the arrival of Holocaust survivors, and the early years of Israel - moments that shaped her lifelong commitment to understanding trauma and resilience. The hosts explore her pioneering work establishing the first psychological care program for Holocaust survivors, the creation of the Danieli Inventory for Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma, and the International Center for the Study, Prevention and Treatment of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma. The conversation moves to her trailblazing work as a victimologist, the advisory roles with the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, and major genocide tribunals. Listeners gain insight into core concepts of trauma studies, including the "conspiracy of silence," which often follows traumatic events and isolates survivors, coping styles, and the intergenerational transmission of trauma. The conversation also addresses the profound psychological impact of October 7 on Jewish communities, which Dr. Danieli describes as "the worst day in Jewish history since the Holocaust," reawakening centuries of Jewish trauma and traumatizing Jews worldwide. She speaks to the sense of betrayal caused by a new "conspiracy of silence" and the

dramatic spike in antisemitism. Dr. Danieli discusses Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's 1977 Knesset address, in which he described a 'psychological wall' of suspicion, fear, and misunderstanding between Israelis and Arabs as representing 70 percent of the conflict, illustrating the deep emotional and psychological dimensions of long-standing tensions. She reflects on the ongoing suffering in Gaza, describing the devastation as "way worse than the Nakba". Throughout the episode, Dr. Danieli shares reflections on the healing role of reparative justice, and the responsibilities of societies and individuals to understand and respond to human suffering, offering listeners a rare opportunity to learn from a truly historic voice in trauma studies and international justice.

### **Links:**

Dr. Danieli asks the hosts to read key findings from a study she conducted for the UN Human Rights Commissioner on the „**Necessary Elements of Healing after Massive Trauma**“. She explains that these findings are based on extensive research across diverse post-conflict contexts, highlighting the psychological, social, and moral elements essential for recovery on an individual, societal, national and international level. She later notes that acknowledging both Israeli and Palestinian pain would require taking these findings and applying them to both sides, holding them together, emphasizing that effective healing must address the suffering of all communities involved on all levels. <https://enrs.eu/article/necessary-elements-of-healing-after-massive-traumatisation> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

Dr. Yael Danieli: <https://www.dryaeldanieli.com/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

International Center for MultiGenerational Legacies of Trauma: <https://icmglt.org/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

Danieli, Yael, editor. *International Handbook of Multigenerational Legacies of Trauma*. Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishing Corporation, 1998. Now Springer Publishing Company. <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-1-4757-5567-1/page/1> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

### **On the Rise of Antisemitism:**

Harvard Caps Poll of October 19, 2023: 62% of 18-24 year olds answered that October 7 „attacks on Jews were genocidal in nature“, but 51% of them answered they were „justified by Palestinian grievances.“ (p. 43). [https://harvardharrispoll.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/HHP\\_Oct23\\_KeyResults.pdf](https://harvardharrispoll.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/HHP_Oct23_KeyResults.pdf) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Annual Report of Antisemitic Incidents in Germany 2024 by RIAS:** [https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/04-06-25\\_Antisemitic\\_incidents\\_in\\_Germany\\_Annual-Report\\_Federal\\_Association\\_RIAS\\_2024.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/04-06-25_Antisemitic_incidents_in_Germany_Annual-Report_Federal_Association_RIAS_2024.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**RIAS Analysis of the Rise of Antisemitism since October 7:** [https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/25-10-06\\_BVRIAS\\_Politischer-Antisemitismus-7-Oktober.pdf](https://report-antisemitism.de/documents/25-10-06_BVRIAS_Politischer-Antisemitismus-7-Oktober.pdf) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

Kompetenzzentrum für Antisemitismusforschung und -strategien (KOAS). *Zwischenbericht: Studie zu den Auswirkungen des 7. Oktober 2023 auf jüdische und israelische Communities in Deutschland*. KOAS – Bildung und Forschung, Sept. 2025: <https://koas-bildungundforschung.de/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ZwischenberichtStudieAuswirkungen7Oktober.pdf> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

Address by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to the Knesset on November 20, 1977: [https://www.palquest.org/en/historictext/21734/address-president-anwar-sadat-knesset?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.palquest.org/en/historictext/21734/address-president-anwar-sadat-knesset?utm_source=chatgpt.com) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

Bruno Bettelheim: „What cannot be talked about can also not be put to rest: and if it is not, the wounds continue to fester from generation to generation.” Quoted in: Danieli, Yael. “Reappraising the Nuremberg Trials and Their Legacy.” *Cardozo Law Review*, vol. 27, no. 5, 2006, pp. 2271–2299.

„Democracy cannot be built with the hands of broken souls.“

***Please also check out our other episodes to explore multiple perspectives.***

### ***Dedication:***

*We dedicate this Podcast to all victims and survivors of October 7, the hostages and their families, to all innocent civilians killed and injured in Gaza and their grieving families and friends. To our dear guests Udi Goren, Khalil Sayegh, Sima and Mai who shared their losses so powerfully with us. To their families: Tal's wife Ella Haimi, their children Nir, Einav, Udi and Lotan, who never got the chance to meet his father. To Khalil Sayegh's mother and siblings, to Mai's and Sima's family, to her mother Bushra.*

*To the blessed memory of: Tal Haimi, Lara Sayegh, Jeries Sayegh, Mahmoud, Danny Darlington and Haim Perry.*

**Disclaimer:**

In each episode of this podcast, the invited guests speak on their own behalf. They share their experiences, assessments, and expert perspectives. These contributions are central to the multiperspectivity of the project but do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial team or producers.

**Legal & Historical Anchor Episodes:**

This podcast may include controversial legal terms of specific technical significance. Their legal applicability requires a thorough expert contextualization; for this, we refer to our legal chapter. All relevant terms of international law, its institutions, current controversies, and the state of jurisprudence are explained in the anchor episode with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Claus Kreß LL.M. (Cambridge) (Episode 36). He is co-author of the Rome Statute, Special Advisor to the International Criminal Court, and Judge at the International Court of Justice in the parallel Gambia vs. Myanmar genocide case.

Historical matters are discussed from multiple perspectives in this podcast. Please check the cross-references in the shownotes of the respective episodes for details. All historically contested issues are addressed in the history anchor episode with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Gudrun Krämer (Episode 21), author of the comprehensive work *A History of Palestine: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (Princeton 2008), a standard reference in the field. For her scholarly achievements as a historian, she was awarded the *Preis des Historischen Kollegs* in 2025, the highest distinction in her discipline in Germany.