Germany Still Hasn't Paid
for Its Sins—
and I Intend to Collect

DID I MISS the most exciting part of the fiftieth-anniversary festivities celebrating the end of World War II? You know, when every single German got down on his or her knees, begged for forgiveness, climbed into boxcars in a show of empathy, and then promised to devote one day's salary each week to a Holocaust survivor's family.

Man, that must have been a sight. Did you miss it, too?

I'm being a little too harsh, you say,

on a country that has already repented and most of whose citizens weren't even alive for all the killing? Hmmm. Let's go to the tote board:

6 million Jews murdered
3 million Catholic Poles murdered
500,000 Gypsies murdered
12,500 homosexuals murdered

Those, plus the Communists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other undesirables, bring us to a grand total of nearly 10 million defenseless humans slaughtered in the Holocaust. This figure does not include the 400,000 Americans who died in the war (fighting Germany and its partners, the Japanese and Italians), the 25 million Soviet citizens killed or starved to death, plus the millions of other Europeans, Africans, and Asians who died at the hands of what was considered to be the most intelligent, most civilized, most advanced society on earth. And to think, it all happened not many years ago.

We continue to live with the results of this tragedy. All of our families, Jewish and non-Jewish, were somehow touched by this event. My dad's brother, Lawrence, was killed near Manila. The map of the world is forever screwed up by World War II, and whether it's Bosnia or the Middle East or skinheads terrorizing the residents of Idaho, you can trace the roots of these conflicts back to what the Germans did.

And what was Germany's punishment for these sins? They got to become one of the richest countries in the world! And it took only three decades! How on earth did we let this happen? Today the average German enjoys a standard of living that has no equal. A factory worker in western Germany last year made an average wage of $29 an hour. In the U.S., that same worker made $19. The American worker annually has to put in nearly 200 hours more on the job than his or her German counterpart. That's five 40-hour weeks the Germans get paid and don't have to work while they're earning 50 percent more per hour than we Americans. And even though Germany is 25 times smaller in size than the U.S., and has one-third fewer workers, its gross domestic product, per capita, is nearly the *same* as that of the U.S.

Can you imagine, as someone's grandmother was being shoved into the ovens at Auschwitz, an angel appearing to her and saying, "Don't worry, the Germans are going to be rewarded by the rest of the world with so much wealth, they won't know what to do with it"?

Don't get me wrong. I'm not suggesting that we should have treated Germany the way we did after World War I, humiliating them into submission and starving the country to death. Those conditions certainly created the climate for Hitler to be elected by a majority of the German people. And since the war, many Germans have lived their lives denouncing what their parents did. Young Germans today—if they aren't shaving their heads and beating immigrant domestic workers—are actually very progressive, pacifist, and well-meaning individuals who just happen, through no fault of their own, to be living the good life.

The war may seem like a long time ago, and the work of only a few evil Nazis, but, according to Daniel Goldhagen, the author of *Hitler's Willing Executioners,* the German government has cataloged more than 330,000 average, everyday Germans who physically participated in the daily slaughter of the Jews. Thousands of those Germans are *still alive today.* In fact, there are over 12 million Germans still kicking around who were fifteen years or older during World War II.

And what have these Germans done to make some kind of reparation for their sins?

"We don't call it reparation," said the woman on the phone at the German Information Center. "It's restitution."

Okay, so how much "restitution" has Germany decided each life they exterminated is worth? Well, according to them, *nothing.* They won't make any "restitution" for the

dead, it was explained to me. But here's the good news. They *will* make up for any *property* loss the Jews suffered. So if you lost a few candlesticks in the Holocaust, step right up for your deutsche marks. Lost your life? Too bad. No *geld* for your loved ones. But ... if you can prove that you spent "at least six months in a concentration camp," were "confined in a ghetto," or were "forced into hiding for a minimum of eighteen months," then you can collect about $350 to $600 a month from the generous Germans. You say you were only tortured in Dachau for five months and twenty-nine days? Too bad! Sue the Germans and you might get a one-time settlement of $3,000.

To date, Germany has doled out $68.3 billion in "restitution" payments. If we break that down for everyone they killed in the Holocaust, how much is it for each of the 10 million they butchered?

The answer: $6,831.

That's it—$6,831 per mother, father, infant, girl, and boy they gassed, burned, shot, or buried alive. Not a bad price to pay, if it means you can end up one day as the wealthiest nation on earth.

As far as I'm concerned, $6,831 per innocent life is not enough. Not that any amount would be "enough," but my life and your life are worth a little more than $6,831.

I know some of you are saying, "Hey, Mike, the survivors got to move to Israel after the war. Didn't giving them that land make it up to them?" Well, I don't think Israel was actually "given" to them. The British were ruling the place (then called Palestine), and suddenly all these Holocaust survivors with nowhere else to go started arriving and the Brits didn't like that one bit. But they didn't have the energy to fight the Jewish guerrillas after

having just lost most of their British empire, so they just bagged the place and said, "Fine, you want this, it's yours." Most Arab residents were not consulted in the deal.

I have never understood why giving the Holocaust survivors Palestine/Israel was such a great gift. Have you ever been there? It's a friggin' desert! There's nothing there! Israelis like to tell you, "We've made the desert bloom!" Talk about rationalizing something . . . I'm telling you, it's 100 percent sand, rock, and more sand. Why did we think we were making it up to them by placing them in a horrible environment that has cost them even more lives in more wars? Because the Bible said so? When did the world start going by *that* book?

If we had really wanted to do what was right—and punish the Germans—we should have given the survivors the state of Bavaria. Now, that's one beautiful piece of real estate! And it would have cost the Germans plenty. Turning Palestine into Israel didn't hurt the Germans one single bit. But losing Bavaria to the Jews would have really kicked those bastards where it counted. Israel has only 10,840 square miles; Bavaria has over 28,000! Israel has few, if any, natural resources; Bavaria is rich in minerals, forests, and water. Since the war, the Israelis have been surrounded by hostile enemies who want them dead; Bavaria is surrounded by the beautiful Alps containing a few goats and those three guys in the Ricola commercial. I guess it's probably too late to correct this mistake by moving Tel Aviv to Munich and forcing the Germans to go and try to make the desert bloom.

I'd say that Germany got off real easy. Only 20 percent of its war criminals were ever put on trial. Many who fought in World War II are still alive. And where do you think they all are today?

Florida!

It's true. Tens of thousands of Germans, many of them of World War II age, have permanently moved to the state of Florida. German investment in Florida has increased by nearly 200 percent in the past five years. According to the *Tampa Tribune,* together with the British, the Germans provide over 50 percent of the total manufacturing jobs in Florida. They have over $1.8 billion invested in the state. Over on the southwest coast, just in the counties of Collier, Lee, and Charlotte, there are as many as 86,000 Germans.

On a recent trip to southwest Florida, I arrived at the airport in Fort Myers, which has extended its runway so that nonstop jumbo jets to and from Germany can land there. I noticed German flags flying from houses. Everywhere I went there were signs that were printed in German: RAUCHEN VERBOTEN!—NO SMOKING. Menus in restaurants were printed in English *and* German. They are buying up property and businesses and settling in for the good life. And more and more of their friends from the fatherland are joining them.

I am of two minds regarding this German invasion of Florida. On the one hand, I hate Florida. It's full of bugs, humidity, and stupid people running around with guns. And it's got those nutty Cuban exiles. If there were a pair of scissors big enough, I wish we could just snip the state where it hangs off the rest of the country.

There is a part of me that likes the fact that all these ex-Nazis are moving there to terrorize the people of Florida. Serves them right. The Right-Wing Cubans versus the Geriatric SS in a fight to the finish! I'd pay money to watch that one on Pay-Per-View.

On the other hand, it is ironic that right there in south Florida are thousands of Jewish survivors of the

Holocaust. Is it right that those Jewish men and women who fortunately survived the Germans' slaughter should have to be reading menus written in German to accommodate their new "neighbors"? I don't think so.

I have a solution. We all know that Florida is infamous for German tourists being murdered there. I do not believe this phenomenon is the result of gang-related violence. I think it's payback time. One by one, the survivors are getting their revenge. Somebody with a sense of justice has armed the elderly residents of Miami Beach, pointed them in the direction of Fort Myers, and let them loose to even the score. Who would have thought that the Germans would make it this easy for them, foolishly moving to the area that contains the highest concentration of Jews outside of New York? What were these Jerries thinking—that the Moskowitzes were going to "live and let live," and "turn the other cheek"? Obviously these Germans forgot about the tote board.

I say arm every bingo player south of Fort Lauderdale and let's celebrate the *real end* of World War II. So—RUN FOR YOUR LIFE, KLAUS! And Happy 50th Anniversary!!