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INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

January 27 marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp. In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly designated this day as International Holocaust Remembrance Day, an annual day of commemoration to honor the victims of the Nazi era.



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

This year, due to the weather conditions in New York, the observance of International Holocaust Remembrance Day at the UN headquarters was cancelled and rescheduled for a later date. But UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon delivered his message that reflects on this event.

"Each year, the international community unites in memory of the Holocaust and reflects on the lessons that we all must heed. It is a vitally important annual observance," said Ban Ki-moon.

"On the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest and most notorious of the Nazi death camps, we remember the millions of Jews, as well as the prisoners of war, political dissidents, and members of minority groups, such as the Roma and Sinti, homosexuals and disabled people, who were systematically murdered by the Nazis and their sympathizers.

"This year, we pay special tribute to the women who suffered in the Holocaust. Mothers and daughters, grandmothers, sisters and aunts, they saw their lives irrevocably changed, their families separated and their traditions shattered. Yet, despite appalling acts of discrimination, deprivation and cruelty, they consistently found ways to fight back against their persecutors.

"They joined the resistance, rescued those in peril, smuggled food into ghettos and made wrenching sacrifices to keep their children alive. Their courage continues to inspire. On this Holocaust Remembrance Day, let us honor these women and their legacy. Let us pledge to create a world where such atrocities can never be repeated.

"We are all aware that such a future has yet to arrive. Everywhere in our world, women and girls continue to endure violence, abuse and discrimination. The United Nations is fully committed to promoting and protecting their fundamental human rights. By empowering women we empower all of society.

"Families should never again have to endure the kind of evil seen during the Holocaust. Only by working together can we prevent genocide and end impunity. By educating new generations about this terrible episode of our history, we can help to uphold human dignity for all."

In Poland the German and Polish presidents on January 27 urged global vigilance to prevent crimes against humanity



Poland's President Bronislaw Komorowski (R) and his German counterpart Christian Wulff (2nd R) pass the main gate of the former Auschwitz death camp, in Oswiecim on January 27, 2011.

as they marked International Holocaust Remembrance Day at the former Auschwitz death camp.

A handful of elderly camp survivors and young Germans and Poles also gathered in *Oswiecim*, southern Poland, for ceremonies marking 66 years since the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex where German Nazis killed more than a million people during World War II.

"Since World War II, across the globe there has not been a single day without war. We continue to witness massacres and genocide on an ethnic, racial, religious or linguistic basis," German President Christian Wulff said.

"This is an appeal to youth to take responsibility for what is happening. Indifference is the worst threat to democracy and liberty."

"Here we must ask how to protect the world against crimes, hate and contempt for human rights. We owe it to those who perished in Auschwitz, but also to those who were killed not long ago in the Balkans and elsewhere," Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski said.

The two leaders also laid flowers at the foot of the notorious wall of death in Auschwitz where the Nazis shot thousands dead.

Survivor David Levin, 85, who now lives in Germany, was 16 when he was deported to Auschwitz.

"People don't know much about Auschwitz. Reading books doesn't teach them as much as meeting witnesses who survived hell. I hope this knowledge stays in their memory forever."

Tomasz Kobylanski, a 21-year-old student from the Jagiellonian University in the nearby southern Polish city of *Krakow*, said meeting survivors was all the more compelling due to the fact that there are only a few left.

"It's very important to be able to meet witnesses of history, all the more so that this is perhaps the last opportunity to speak with them."

Trustees at the Auschwitz museum also marked the liberation anniversary Thursday by launching a Facebook drive to help raise 120 million euros to preserve the site of the camp for posterity.

In Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, speaking to parliament ahead of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, called on the world to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and act against the Jewish state's arch-foe Iran.

He accused the "regime of the ayatollahs" of inciting a new "genocide" against the Jewish people.

Israel regards Iran as its principal threat, after repeated predictions by its hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of the Jewish state's demise.

The Iranian leader has also frequently and publicly denied the Holocaust, calling it a "myth."

Netanyahu said world leaders were aware of the mass murder of the Jews being carried out by the Nazis during the

Holocaust but failed to act, and urged them not to make the same mistake today.

"They knew and did not act," Netanyahu said.

"Today they know, they hear, they see, they film," Netanyahu said of Iran's threats. "Will they act, will they speak, really speak, attack or condemn?"



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"I expect the world will learn the lesson and act with words and deeds against the new anti-Semitism," Netanyahu said.

In Washington US President Barack Obama joined a list of other world leaders in marking Holocaust Remembrance Day.

"I join people here at home, in Israel, and around the world in commemorating International Holocaust Remembrance Day, as we mark one of the darkest, most destructive periods in human history," he said.

"To remember is a choice, and today we remember the innocent victims of the Nazis' murderous hate – six million Jews and millions of other people. We are reminded to remain ever-vigilant against the possibility of genocide, and to ensure that 'Never Again' is not just a phrase but a principled cause. And we resolve to stand up against prejudice, stereotyping, and violence – including the scourge of anti-Semitism – around the globe," Obama added.

In Brussels the Israeli Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs, in cooperation with the presidency of the European Parliament, the European Jewish Congress, and the Holocaust Memorial of Yad Vashem, held an event to mark International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust.

This event, the first of its kind, took place at the European Parliament.

Israeli Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs Minister Yuli Edelstein, European Parliament President Jerzy Buzek, European Jewish Congress President Moshe Kantor, and Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel were among the participants.

As part of the program, memorial candles were lit by Jewish Holocaust survivors from Europe and Israel.

The main feature of the event was a unique concert by the Ra'anana Symphony Orchestra in order to present its special Holocaust memorial program, titled "Alma Rosé – from Vienna to Auschwitz."

The musical program tells the story of

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NUREMBERG LAWS HANDED OVER TO US NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The Nuremberg Laws, which laid the legal groundwork for the execution of six million Jews during the Holocaust, have been handed over to the US National Archives.

Consisting of four pages, and signed by Adolf Hitler, the anti-Semitic documents were appropriated by US General George Patton at the end of the Second World War after being discovered in Bavaria.

Gen. Patton disobeyed orders that Nazi documents were to be handed over to the government and spirited them out of Germany, later depositing them at the Huntington Library in Los Angeles, close to where he grew up.

The library placed them in a bomb-proof vault and they were a missing piece of evidence at the Nuremberg trials that followed the war.

Prosecutors had to use photocopies, and the existence of the originals was only disclosed in 1999.

The library has now handed them over to the National Archives in Washington, D.C., so they can be placed with the rest of the war crimes trial evidence. Archivists hope to put them on public show later this year.

Drawn up in 1935, the laws rescinded the citizenship of German Jews and barred them from marrying non-Jews. They also forbade Jews from having sexual relation-

ships with non-Jews, and stopped them flying the German flag.

Under the laws people were classified as Jews if they had three or four Jewish grandparents, and those with one or two Jewish grandparents were described as *Mischling*, or of "mixed blood."

Huntington Library President Steve Koblik said: "We were aware of the fact that Gen. Patton, who had received the docu-



Visitors get a close view of the 1935 Nuremberg Laws, promulgated by the Third Reich as the beginning of persecution of Jews.

ments from his staff as a gift and deposited them at the Huntington, had not paid attention in his souvenir hunting to the orders of his commander-in-chief.

"Had Gen. Patton not taken these documents, they would have been part of the collection the government was putting together in order to prepare for the Nuremberg trials."

AMISH COMMUNITY ASKS FORGIVENESS OF JEWS AT KOTEL

Representatives of the Amish community from the United States and Switzerland paid a visit to the Western Wall, where they asked the Jewish people's forgiveness for their group's silence during the Nazi extermination of Jews in the Holocaust.



Representatives of the Amish community at the Western Wall.

Part of what made the visit special was that the Amish, a sect of the Mennonite Church that largely rejects modern technology, do not normally use contemporary forms of transportation such as the aircraft on which they made the journey to the Holy Land. It is likely that this delegation

does not represent the Amish at large, but rather their faction of the larger church.

But according to an announcement issued by the office of Western Wall Rabbi Shmuel Rabinovitch, with whom the group met, the Amish delegates saw great importance in coming to Israel and expressing their contrition, as well as declaring their unreserved

support of the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

The delegation members stressed that they were neither seeking any kind of gesture from the Jewish people nor looking to proselytize — only to support Israel for the simple reason that in the past they hadn't.

Rabinovitch was presented with various tokens at a ceremony in the Hasmonian chamber, including a parchment with a request for forgiveness in the name of the entire Amish community, along with a commitment that from now on, it would loudly voice its support of the Jewish people, especially in the wake of the expressions of hatred by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his extensions.

Police evacuated the synagogue building and combed it for explosives, but found nothing suspicious.

Rabbi Schwartz told the newspaper that the letter was also sent to "10 or 12" synagogues, although police have not confirmed if explicit bomb threats were made in every letter.

The *Post* noted that the same day the letter was discovered, New York state officials released annual statistics showing that hate crimes rose by 14 percent, while hate crimes in New York City rose by 6 percent. Seventy incidents were recorded in Manhattan.

HATE LETTER THREATENED WAVE OF NY SYNAGOGUE ATTACKS

A hate letter threatened a wave of New York synagogue bombings on New Year's Eve, including an Upper West Side house of worship, whose spiritual leader, Rabbi Alan Schwartz, told *The New York Post*, "Someone wants to spread fear."

His *Ohab Zedek* synagogue — a religious center for hundreds of New York professionals, many of them singles — received a letter, threatening to blow up the house of worship on the eve of the Jewish Sabbath Friday night, which also was the eve of the secular new year.

FRENCH HOLOCAUST ROLE RECOGNIZED

France's highest court has recognized the state's "responsibility" for the deportation of Jews in World War II.

The Council of State said the state had permitted or facilitated deportations that led to anti-Semitic persecution without being coerced by the occupiers.

But the council also found reparations had since been made "as much as was possible, for all the losses suffered."

Correspondents say the ruling is the clearest such recognition of the French state's role in the Holocaust.

Between 1942 and 1944 some 76,000 Jews were deported from France by the Vichy government in collaboration with the German occupying army.

In 1995, former French President Jacques Chirac officially recognized the French state's responsibility in the deportation of Jews, putting an end to decades of ambiguity by successive governments.

"These dark hours forever sully our history and are an insult to our past and our traditions," he said. "Yes, the criminal folly of the occupiers was seconded by the French, by the French state."

Previous administrations had always blamed either Nazi Germany or the Vichy government, absolving the French state of responsibility.

The Council of State's pronouncement came after the Paris administrative court sought its opinion on a case brought by the daughter of a deportee killed at Auschwitz, who is seeking reparations from the French state.

She is also asking for material and moral damages for her own personal suffering during and after the German occupation.

In its judgment, the council said it believed the responsibility of the state was evident because it had "permitted or facilitated the deportation from France of persons who had been victims of anti-Semitic persecution."

The state's actions were not the result of "direct constraints put upon it by the occupying force," it added.

The council cited "arrests, internments and displacement to transit camps" carried out by the French authorities, which it said were "the first stage of the deportation of these people to camps in which most of them were exterminated."

However, the court also said that it did not believe the government should be liable for any further compensation claims.

"The reparations required called for individual compensation for victims, as well as a solemn recognition of the state's responsibility and of the loss and damages collectively suffered," it explained.

"The various measures taken since the end of World War II, both in terms of compensation as well as symbolic reparation, have repaired, as much as was possible, all the losses suffered."

In 2007, a Bordeaux appeal court overturned a ruling ordering the state railway operator, SNCF, to compensate the family of deportees.

ISRAEL TRIED TO ABDUCT ADOLF EICHMANN 11 YEARS BEFORE HIS CAPTURE, REPORT SAYS

Israel attempted and failed to abduct Adolf Eichmann eleven years before successfully capturing the Nazi war criminal, the German newspaper *Der Spiegel* reported.

Eichmann, considered one of the key architects of the Final Solution, was captured by Mossad agents in 1960. A year later, he was sentenced to death, and he was hanged in 1962.

Basing its report on classified German intelligence documents, *Der Spiegel* described a detailed attempt to apprehend Eichmann in Austria as early as 1949, an attempt which eventually failed due to bad intelligence.

The failed operation was based on a mistaken premise according to which Eichmann was to visit his wife in the town of *Bad Aussee* in the state of *Styria*.

A plane containing an Israeli commando team was already at hand in *Salzburg* airport in order to abduct the Nazi war criminal, but Eichmann, who was at that time hiding in northern Germany, never showed up.

According to the *Der Spiegel* report, the source for the bad intelligence was a questionable informant, who had been employed by Austrian intelligence, as well as other intelligence agencies, and even cooperated at one time with famed Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal.

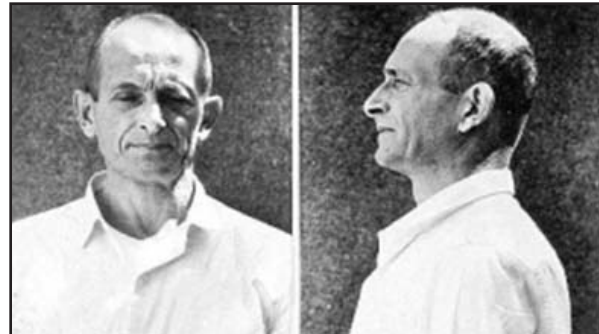
The German intelligence documents quoted by *Der Spiegel* added that the arrest itself was to be conducted by Austrian police, with Israel having paid a chief Austrian official 50,000 schillings as well as offering a 1 million shilling reward.

The *Der Spiegel* report comes after the German daily *Bild* reported that the West German secret service knew about Eich-

mann's hiding place in Argentina nearly a decade before Israeli agents captured the Nazi criminal in 1960.

According to documents recently released, the predecessor of today's *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, or BND, knew at least since 1952 Eichmann's fake name and the country where he was hiding.

"SS Colonel Eichmann is not to be found in Egypt but is residing in Argentina under the fake name Clemens. E.'s address is known to the editor-in-chief of the German



Adolf Eichmann.

newspaper in Argentina *Der Weg* [The Way]," an index card from 1952 stated, according to the paper.

Hiding in Argentina, Eichmann indeed used the false name Ricardo Klement. When he sent for his wife and children to join him in South America from Austria, the West German intelligence service, then still called the Gehlen Organization, learned of Eichmann's hiding place but did nothing to attempt to capture him, according to the paper.

German historian Dr. Bettina Stangneth, who has been researching the topic for six years, said the discovery of the index card is indeed a "sensation," according to *Bild*. "Until now it was not known that the West German secret service knew about Eichmann's hiding place eight years before his arrest."

INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

(Continued from page 1)

Alma Rosé, a composer and conductor who established an orchestra in Auschwitz and died there in 1944.

A member of the orchestra played a special violin that belonged to a Jew who died at Auschwitz and which remains as a symbol of the culture of humanity amidst the horror.

In Jerusalem on the eve of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem and Google have announced a partnership to put the world's largest collection of Holocaust documents onto the Internet in order to preserve and access these archives.

The Jerusalem-based archive is devoted to the documentation, research, education, and commemoration of the Holocaust. Its photo collection will be made more widely accessible for people around the world to search and discover the photographs on its website and share their own personal stories and thoughts.

This resource will be valuable to those interested in researching the Holocaust, whether to find out more about family members whose stories are collected in the center or out of general interest.

As a first step towards bringing the vast archive online over time, 130,000 photos from Yad Vashem's archive will be viewable in full resolution online.

Google has implemented experimental optical character recognition (OCR) technology to carry out this project, making previously difficult to locate documents searchable and discoverable online.

YAD VASHEM WILL GET ACCESS TO WWII POLISH ARCHIVES

Israel's Holocaust museum Yad Vashem signed an agreement with Poland that gives it access to World War II-era documents held in archives across the Eastern European country.

The material, held in 34 state-run and provincial archives, mainly includes files produced by the Nazi German authorities who occupied Poland during the war. But some of the archives also contain materials produced by Jews imprisoned in ghettos, amounting to rare and precious wartime testimony of huge value to historians, according to Avner Shalev, Yad Vashem chairman.

Shalev, who was in Warsaw for the signing, called it "a real step forward" for Holocaust researchers because it will give them easier access to material that has often been difficult for them to see, particularly during the communist era.

In particular, Shalev said he hopes that it will help the museum, memorial and research institute in Jerusalem identify as many as 250,000 Holocaust victims in Poland who remain unidentified.

LITHUANIAN COURT: SWASTIKA IS A "HISTORIC LEGACY"

A Lithuanian court has ruled that a swastika is part of the country's historic legacy and not a Nazi symbol.

The May 19 ruling capped a three-month case involving four men who displayed swastikas at *Klaipeda's* national independence parade.

"It is not a Nazi attribute, but a valuable symbol of the Baltic culture, an ancient sign of our ancestors, which had been stolen from them and treacherously used by other peoples," one of the defense witnesses said, according to RT, Russia's English news channel.

Efraim Zuroff, the Simon Wiesenthal Center's chief Nazi hunter and Israel director, called the decision "outrageous" and likely to lead to a tremendous increase in

"We're focused on finding new and innovative ways to make the enormous amount of data in our archives, accessible and searchable to a global audience," said Avner Shalev, chairman of Yad Vashem.



Avner Shalev, Chairman of Yad Vashem (L), and Yossi Matias, director of Google's research and development center in Israel, announce their partnership in Jerusalem on January 26.

He said Google "is an integral partner in our mission, as they help us to reach new audiences, including young people around the world, enabling them to be active in the discussion about the Holocaust."

Yossi Matias, director of Google's research and development center in Israel, declared: "For some time, Google has been working to bring the world's historical and cultural heritage online. The Internet offers a great opportunity to preserve and share important materials stored in archives."

Yad Vashem was established in 1953 and holds a great wealth of testimonies, photographs, diaries, and other documentary material.

"This is our wish and we are embarking on a very ambitious project to identify them," Shalev said.

He said Yad Vashem has identified about 4 million of the 6 million Jews murdered by the Nazis. About 3 million of those were Polish Jews, and Yad Vashem still lacks names for about half of the Polish Jews and others in Eastern Europe.

The agreement allows Yad Vashem to systematically photocopy millions of documents and to integrate them into Yad Vashem's archives, where they will become available in the coming years to researchers and the public, museum spokeswoman Estee Yaari said.

Yad Vashem was also one of the recipients of the roughly 6.5 terabytes of digitized files from the International Tracing Service of the Red Cross in *Bad Arolsen*, Germany. The materials include documents on concentration camps, ghettos and prisons, and files from displaced-person camps and emigration after World War II.

the use of Nazi symbols by Lithuania's ultranationalists.

"Allowing the use of swastikas sends a clear message to those local residents harshly victimized by the Nazis that they are no longer welcome in their country of birth," he said. Lithuanian judges are "again" showing bias in favor of Holocaust perpetrators rather than victims.

"We urge the Lithuanian courts to overturn this outrageous and contemptible decision as quickly as possible," Zuroff said.

Swastikas previously have been displayed in Lithuania on May Day, and once in front of the presidential palace in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius, according to news reports. Neither instance prompted police or legal action.

HIMMLER'S DAUGHTER FUNDING NAZIS TO ESCAPE JUSTICE

Heinrich Himmler's daughter devotes her life to a charity which helps some of the Third Reich's most evil criminals to escape justice.

65 years after World War II ended, Gudrun Himmler, who is now aged 81 and is a mother of two, is part of an organization called *Stille Hilfe* – or Silent Aid.

Her father helped to organize the murder of six million Jews. Himmler would often arrange for his young daughter to come visit him wherever he was, and she would often go to concentration camps with him. On a visit to *Dachau*, Gudrun strolled around with her adoring father and his servants while yards away prisoners were beaten, starved, killed, and burned in the camp crematorium.

Today, she lives a secretive life, always trying to keep herself away from the gaze of her neighbors as she runs the organization open to a select few Nazi sympathizers.

Ten years ago in *Ulrichsberg*, northern Austria, she made a rare appearance at a neo-Nazi rally, representing *Stille Hilfe*.

Young hate-mongers there were awed to be among their idols – Waffen SS veterans as well as a handful of camp guards and the "desk murderers" who pushed the pens that moved the trains that fed the gas chambers.

Andrea Ropke, an authority on neo-Nazism who attended the rally, said: "But everyone was terrified of Gudrun. All these high-ranking former officers lined up and she asked, 'Where did you serve?', showing off her vast knowledge of military logistics."

Gudrun does not deny her involvement with *Stille Hilfe*, describing herself in a rare interview as simply one of the few

members in a dying organization. "It's true I help where I can, but I refuse to discuss my work."

Recently it was revealed that *Stille Hilfe* is funding the defense of a Dutch Nazi living in Germany. Klaas Faber, 88, is wanted by Holland to resume a life term for murdering Jews and resistance fighters in the war.

It also bankrolled the legal fight of Samuel Kunz, who died last November aged 89 before answering for his crimes as a guard at *Belzec* death camp in Poland.

Prosecutors say he was involved in murdering 433,000 people.

The organization is said to have around 25 active members – but also several



Gudrun Himmler.

hundred secret sympathizers, who fund and support its projects.

However, it is to Germany's discredit that it seems to be turning a blind eye to the group's nefarious activities.

The opposition Social Democratic party has also called for an investigation into its charitable status – but so far Berlin has refused to act against it.

MASS GRAVE OF HOLOCAUST VICTIMS UNEARTHED

A mass grave containing the bodies of Jews killed by the Romanian army during the Second World War has been discovered in a forest in northeastern Romania.



Archeologists work in a mass grave of Jews killed by Romanian troops during the Second World War in a forest in northeast Romania.

"So far we exhumed 16 bodies, but this is just the beginning because the mass grave is very deep and we only dug up superficially," Adrian Cioflanca, the researcher responsible for the find, told reporters at a news conference.

The Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania and Cioflanca both said they believe up to 100 bodies could be buried in the mass grave.

HITLER HOUSE SALE ALARMS LOCALS

The sale of Adolf Hitler's family home in the Austrian town of *Braunau am Inn* has triggered concern that it could become a shrine for Nazi sympathizers.

The unassuming house where Hitler was born in 1889 has been put on the market priced at 2.2 million euros (\$3.3 million).

Residents and local politicians fear that the property could fall into the hands of far-right extremists. The building is currently used by an organization helping the disabled and has

at various times in its history housed a library, bank, and technical institute.

Some historians have suggested turning the building into a museum.

However, *Braunau's* mayor Gerhard Skiba vigorously opposes the idea, saying it would encourage people from all over the world to visit the site.

For the time being, the only reminder of the building's infamous past is a small memorial dedicated to the victims of the Nazis.



BOOK REVIEWS

IN THE SHADOW OF THE RED BANNER

In the Shadow of the Red Banner: Soviet Jews in the War against Nazi Germany.

By Yitzhak Arad. Yad Vashem, The International Institute for Holocaust Research. Gefen Publishing House: Jerusalem, 2010. 384 pp. \$38.00 hardcover.

REVIEWED BY DR. KIRIL FEFERMAN

The claim that Jews did not contribute sufficiently in the war effort of their host country, or, to put it otherwise, stayed in the rear instead of fighting, is not new and was never limited to Russia. Suffice it to mention the accusations made against German Jewry during the First World War and its aftermath at the official level and in public opinion. In the Tsarist Empire such charges were especially pronounced during the First World War, when they were made by the country's military and civil authorities.

The situation in the Soviet Union during the Second World War was different. Soviet government never accused its Jewish citizens of sitting on the fence. Yet, Soviet public opinion was permeated to no small extent by such accusations. This came partly from traditional centuries-long perception of Jews as a nation that did best to refrain from getting involved in fighting. Much more perilous, however, was the Nazi propaganda claim that attempted to

inculcate in the Soviet population the idea of Jewish cowardice and of their sending non-Jews to fight for Jews.

In a way, it seems to me that the Nazi propaganda succeeded, at least partly, in this respect. That Soviet Jews excelled on the fronts of the Great Patriotic War, as the Soviet-German war in 1941–45 came to be known in the USSR, was known to masses of Soviet Jews by virtue of the fact that very many of them served in the army, worked in military plants, and, to a smaller extent, were involved in anti-German activities in the occupied territories. Yet, apart from a circle of those with whom Jews fought and worked to achieve the victory over Nazi Germany, this was far from being clear to many in the midst of the Soviet population.

Furthermore, the fact that many Soviet Jews, whether in the occupied territories or in those under Soviet control, struggled and were "not led to slaughter like cattle" remained for years far from being clear to Western and Israeli audience. This had to do with the main Holocaust

narrative underlining suffering and martyrdom. In Israel, Jewish heroism was largely associated with the Warsaw ghetto uprising. But the main reason why this knowledge

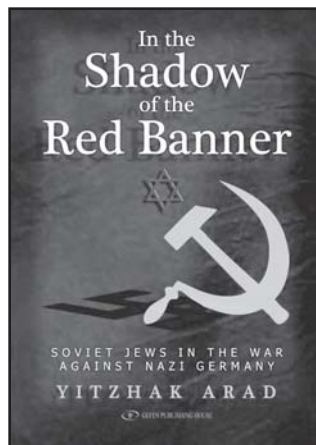
escaped the attention of Western and Israeli public was the Iron Curtain. During the Cold War, the overwhelming trend in Holocaust research was to downplay the affinity of Soviet and Jewish interests in the Second World War. Only the fall of the USSR made it possible for Holocaust scholars to acknowledge high-profile fighting by Jews on the Soviet side or alongside the Soviet side. And Yitzhak Arad, himself a Jewish fighter who fought on the Soviet side against the Nazis, and who rose to prominence in Israel as both a public figure and a leading Holocaust historian, is probably the ideal one to chronicle the heroic saga of Jews who struggled "under the Red banner" against Nazi Germany.

Arad's account is a truly panoramic, multidimensional account and encompasses, to borrow his own words, "the

broad spectrum of Jewish activities during the war in their entirety: the army, the underground, the partisans, the battle waged by the prisoners of war for survival and the development and manufacture of weapons" (p. xvii).

The volume provides a solid background describing the developments in Eastern Europe from the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in August 1939 to the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. The author then studies meticulously the participation of Jews in fighting in the ranks of the Red Army on the fronts and in the branches (including medical corps, political administration, air forces, navy, and intelligence) throughout the entire war period. Part two covers Jewish participation in the war industries. Arad then turns to depicting the Nazi occupation of the Soviet territories and the activities of varied partisan movements operating there. This serves him as a background for the Jewish armed resistance in the occupied territories (underground in ghettos — the subject where the book is particularly strong — and fighting in forests) described in the next chapters.

One of the delights of this volume is the
(Continued on page 13)



INSIDE IG FARBEN: HOECHST DURING THE THIRD REICH

Inside IG Farben: Hoechst During the Third Reich.

By Stephan H. Lindner. English translation by Helen Schoop. Cambridge University Press: New York, 2008. 388 pp. \$65.00 hardcover.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

These days it's become increasingly easy — in some circles — to rationalize away the brutal acts of the Nazis vis-à-vis the Jews during World War II. After all, they will argue, the Jews are not the first, nor, sadly, the last to be persecuted and murdered by their enemies. Look at all of human history! Look at all the world today! There's plenty of persecution and murder to go around!

True, but none of these bloodlettings, not ever, was so systematized politically, economically, and socially both on a local and a national level as that cold and premeditated annihilation of the Jews so ruthlessly organized by the evil genius of Hitler and his Third Reich. Indeed, Stephan H. Lindner's exceptionally well-researched and conscientiously written volume, entitled *Inside IG Farben: Hoechst During the Third Reich*, confirms the above and much more as the author specifically and intently examines one factory, Hoechst, part of the huge corporation known as I.G. Farbenindustrie AG — a firm that profited mightily from its collusion with Nazism.

Thus Lindner relates to us how Hoechst, a manufacturer of aniline and aniline dyes, was founded in 1863. We learn of the addition of a Pharmaceuticals Department. This department would, with the years, become

Hoechst's "pride and joy." We read of how economic troubles encouraged Hoechst to merge with other chemical companies, most prominently BASF and Bayer to eventually become I. G. Farbenindustrie AG, better known as I.G. Farben. Then, with the coming of Hitler, we clearly see Hoechst's (as part of IG Farben) ever-increasing collaboration with the Third Reich, an opportunistic action which would eventually lead to the trial at the 1947-48 American military tribunal in Nuremberg of a number of the company's and corporation's leadership.

So what did this "increasing collaboration" exactly mean?

It means that with the very dawn of Hitler's reign Hoechst's leadership and employees increasingly became members of the Nazi party. In fact, some became "enthusiastic" members. For example, in 1933 Ludwig Hermann was appointed head of the IG Farben plant at Hoechst. In a 1935 speech he called Hitler "a gift from Providence." Another "enthusiastic" member was Georg Kränzlein, "a fanatical anti-Semite" and a director at the plant who also became a member of the SS. Indeed, the SS would praise "his zeal and 'idealism.'" Interestingly, Lindner notes here that Kränzlein, "even before the outbreak of the Second World War . . . apparently prophesied 'a great cleansing of Jews in Europe including in Russia' with the result 'that within five years Europe will have no more Jews.'"

"Increasing collaboration" means that with the very dawn of Hitler's reign it wasn't at all long before Hoechst employees who were Jewish or regarded as Jewish (many were converts) were increasingly "retired" from their work. The actual "timing" for

each depended on "expediency" or, simply put, if a qualified non-Jewish replacement was handily available. Less often it depended on the "personal sympathy" of a manager who might feel for a Jewish employee . . . for a while . . . In the end, though, the result was that brilliant Jewish chemists and researchers, in fact, cursorily and ruthlessly thrown out of their positions and instead condemned by the Reich to work at the most menial labor, often committed suicide. Much luckier than most was Robert Julius Schnitzer, a Jew and a chemotherapist who actually got to the United States. In the U.S. he joined Hoffman La Roche as head of its Chemotherapeutical Laboratory, where he and his laboratory would win the coveted Lasker Prize for their "development of the active agent for the treatment of tuberculosis" used to this day.

"Increasing collaboration," finally and horribly, also means that Hoechst, in partnership with the SS, eventually "took part in ghastly experiments and trials conducted on concentration camp inmates." Thus we read how inmates in Buchenwald were deliberately infected with typhus and died miserable deaths in order to "test" one of Hoechst's drugs. Hoechst also "tested" in Auschwitz and Gusen/Mauthausen.

In his book, Lindner concludes by telling us that at the trial at the 1947-48 military tribunal in Nuremberg of all of IG Farben, Hoechst included, some few individuals were found guilty of crimes and received jail sentences. By 1951, however, all were free . . . and most, ironically, were working within what had once been the corporation IG Farben, now become a bunch of independent companies freed of the guilt associated with the very name of IG Farben and Nazism.

Dr. Diane Cypkin is a Professor of Media, Communication, and Visual Arts at Pace University.

THE SHOAH

Mizmor L'David Anthology (Volume I: The Shoah).

Edited by Michal Mahgerefteh with assistance from Pete Freas, Michelle Langenberg and Jack Callan. Poetica Publishing Company. 2010. 91 pp. \$15.00.

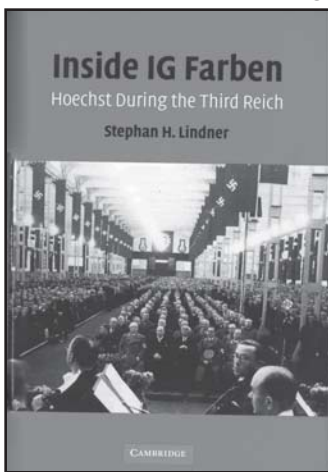
REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

We are once more beholden within a brief span of time to Michal Mahgerefteh — poet, artist, editor and publisher — Tidewater's own woman of valor of Jewish letters whose indefatigable initiative and creativity are exemplary testimony to what one person can accomplish to enrich the Jewish world.

She offers a stage on Jewish themes to poets and authors, along with establishing a fruitful literary bond and bridge between the North American and European Diaspora and Israel. Michal, whose first collection of poetry (*In My Bustan*) appeared in 2009 through her Poetica Publishing Company, is enchanting us again with the present collection of poems and short stories by children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors, representing diverse and rich histories of background and accomplishments.

In the book's Introduction author Sandra Hurtes, who teaches at John Jay College, shares instructively and challengingly: "Many contribute to the largest body of work on the Holocaust, each voice, each experience, unique yet utterly and uncannily similar. But, while we carry these stories, we owe it to our parents and their very survival to move forward rather than stay wedded to their past. We owe it to ourselves to not carry on their suffering... It is Michal's hope that the sharing of experience will create a collective consciousness so that anyone can be an educator. In this way, we transform the burden of memory into a flame that lights the world."

A literary anthology such as this one on
(Continued on page 13)



THE HOLOCAUST IN LITHUANIA: ONE MAN'S CRUSADE TO BRING JUSTICE

BY PAUL FRYSH, CNN

Efraim Zuroff's great-uncle was kidnapped in Vilnius, Lithuania, on July 13, 1941, by a gang of Lithuanians "roaming the streets of the city looking for Jews with beards to arrest."

"He was taken to *Lukiskis* Prison — to this day the main jail in the city — and was murdered shortly thereafter," says Zuroff. So were his wife and two boys.

Born seven years later in Brooklyn, New York, Zuroff was named for his great-uncle and grew up questioning his American-born parents about the Holocaust.

What were they doing? What could they have done?

"And my parents — they said, 'Listen ... we went to demonstrations, we tried to do what we could. But we didn't really know what was going on, and it wasn't clear what we could do.'"

That answer did not satisfy Zuroff.



Lithuanians welcome Nazi soldiers with flowers in the summer of 1941.

"I wanted to know what the average Jew sitting in his living room in Baltimore, New York, Chicago, Miami, could have known by reading the newspapers.

"I wanted to try and understand how something like the Holocaust could have happened."

Zuroff would go on to spend his life hunting Nazis and ensuring their punishment. Now the Israel director of The Simon Wiesenthal Center, he has also worked for the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, which is in charge of Nazi war crimes prosecutions. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, more names of al-

leged Holocaust criminals have turned up from Lithuania than from anywhere else in Eastern Europe, says Zuroff.

But prosecuting those criminals for war crimes has been a disappointment, says Zuroff, because since its independence in 1991, Lithuania has failed to punish a single one of its own Holocaust war criminals.

Now, says Zuroff, Lithuania is trying to rewrite Holocaust history. "Nowhere in the world," he says, "has a government gone to such lengths to obscure their role in the Holocaust. ... Their mission is to change the history of the Holocaust to make themselves blameless."

LITHUANIA AND THE NAZIS

Within five months of Nazi Germany's invasion in the summer of 1941, most of Lithuania's 200,000 to 220,000 Jews were dead — shot and left in massive sand pits and mass graves along with thousands of ethnic Poles, the mentally ill and others. By the end of the war, the percentage of Jews killed in Lithuania — 90 to 96 percent — was as high as or higher than anywhere else in Europe.

"And the question is, 'Why were the numbers so high?' And here we come to a subject that is very, very delicate and difficult," says Zuroff. "One of the main reasons so many Jews were killed here is because of the help of the local population — of the Lithuanians."

The pace of the mass murder of Lithuania's Jews — and the active participation of the local population — are meticulously recorded in two of the most infamous documents of Holocaust history.

The Jaeger Report, written by Karl Jaeger, the SS commander of a Nazi killing unit that operated around Vilnius, Lithuania, is a matter-of-fact account of those killed each day under his command.

September 1, 1941, a typical entry, lists those killed for the day as: "1,404 Jewish children, 1,763 Jews, 1,812 Jewesses, 109 mentally sick people, one German woman who was married to a Jew, and one Russian woman."

In the report, Jaeger notes the "essential" help of local Lithuanians and says 4,000 Jews were "liquidated by pogroms and executions," exclusively by Lithuanian partisans. The final count of those murdered starting in the summer of 1941 and ending in November of that year is 133,346 — the vast majority of them Jews.

READ JAEGER REPORT

Ponary Diary, 1941-1943: A By-stander's Account of a Mass Murder was written by Polish-Lithuanian journalist Kazimierz Sakowicz, who was living within earshot of the biggest killing field in Lithuania, the sand pits of the *Ponary* Forest.

It is a litany of unending cruelty — mostly of Lithuanians killing Lithuanian Jews. Entries from April 5, 1943, describe the murder of about 2,500 Jews who arrive in 48 train freight cars:

"A woman with a child in her arms and with two small girls clinging to her dress: A Lithuanian begins to beat them mercilessly with a club. A Jew without a jacket throws himself on the Lithuanian to defend the woman being beaten. A shot is fired — he falls, practically at the feet of his Jewess. A second Lithuanian seizes the woman's child and throws him into the pit; the Jewish woman, like a madwoman, runs to the pit, followed by her two little children. Three shots are fired."

The Nazis arrived after a year of occupation by the Soviet Union that was so brutal that many Lithuanians welcomed the Nazis when they arrived in June 1941.

Nazi propaganda painted local Jews as communists in league with the Soviets, stoking existing local anti-Semitism, and prompting the provisional government in Lithuania, and thousands of Lithuanians, to help facilitate the Nazi policy of liquidating the local Jewish population, according to Yale historian Timothy Snyder, who has written extensively about the region.

In reality, Jews — making up many of the "bourgeois" merchants and intellectuals that the Soviets sought to "re-educate" — bore as much or more Soviet brutality as any, says Snyder.

And yet, even today, says Leonidas Donskis, a Lithuanian MP in the European Par-

liament, "quite a large segment of Lithuanian society is still inclined to consider Jews as collectively responsible for the mass killings and deportations of civilians, as well as for other atrocities committed during the Soviet occupation."

This myth is "just the adoption of the disgraceful Nazi rhetoric concerning the Jew and Communism ... which is one of the cornerstones of [Nazi propaganda chief Joseph] Goebbels' propaganda," says Donskis.

THE PROSECUTIONS

In the 1990s, soon after Lithuania regained its independence, the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, consulting with Zuroff, discovered dozens of Lithuanians with suspicious wartime backgrounds living in the United States.

Nineteen were successfully prosecuted for concealing their wartime collaboration with the Nazis during the American immigration and naturalization process. Since the United States had no jurisdiction to prosecute them for war crimes, it took the maximum legal action it could — stripping them of their citizenship. Twelve ended up back in Lithuania, each with an extensive case file detailing the evidence gathered by OSI.

But the Lithuanian prosecutor's office showed no inclination to pursue the cases and Lithuania, for the most part, says Zuroff, "welcomed them back with open arms."

Only after several years of delays and significant international pressure, says Zuroff, were three of the cases prosecuted. In the end, no one was ever punished.

Audrius Bruzga, Lithuanian ambassador to the United States, says Lithuania facilitated the trials to the extent that it could. The problem was not a lack of political will, he says, but a lack of time, because of the age of the defendants.

"People simply died during the process," he says, "and the others perhaps were not found fit to stand trial. ... It takes a lot of time to put a case on."

But others say the delays were purposeful. The prosecutor's office was afraid of being called unpatriotic, says Donskis, so it dragged out the process in the hope
(Continued on page 14)

SIX DECADES AFTER HOLOCAUST, COUSINS REUNITE

They learned English, married, had children, and led happy lives in new countries. And for many years two cousins thought: I survived the Nazis, but my cousin didn't.

That changed after Saul Dreier, 85, asked the American Red Cross to help him find his cousin Lucy Weinberg, 82, early last year.

The Red Cross's Holocaust and War Victims Tracing Center scoured records from more than 180 Red Cross societies for clues.

The ones that came through were the societies in Poland and the Czech Republic. And finally, after Weinberg was located in Montreal, the reunion took place at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport.

As Weinberg approached him, Dreier cried, "Is this Lucy? Is this Lucy?" She smiled at him, then he swept her into a long embrace that brought him to tears.

"It's been 65 years," Dreier said. "There are no words ..."

"We saw each other when we were children," Weinberg said. "Now we see each other when we are old."

The two grew up together in *Krakow*, Poland, though they were not close as children.

But having lost the rest of his family in the Holocaust, Dreier became determined to find Weinberg. He suspected she was alive, having heard that from a mutual friend in the 1960s, but he didn't know where she was.

The last time he saw her was during World War II, when the two cousins were working in a Nazi labor camp in Poland. Their families had been forced into a ghetto in *Krakow* before being deported to the concentration camps. Dreier said he watched his mother board a train that took her "to a crematorium." Weinberg's two brothers and sister perished one by one.

Eventually Dreier was sent to the concentration camp at *Plaszow*. His cousin and her mother were sent to the same camp, where they worked making pots and pans at the famous Oskar Schindler's factory. Dreier worked at a different factory near Schindler's, repairing airplane radiators.

In 1944, Dreier was sent to a concentration camp in Austria that was liberated by

U.S. troops. He was a refugee in Italy until he came to America in 1949. He first settled in Coney Island, married, began a career in construction, and raised a family.



After the mutual friend told him his cousin survived the camps, Dreier contacted Holocaust assistance groups, Israel's leading Holocaust museum, and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, for assistance. The searches came up empty.

In January 2010, Dreier saw an Internet ad about how the American Red Cross reunites war victims.

He applied. In June, the agency let him know it was on the case.

The center uses "meticulous" records the Germans kept to find names and birthdates now stored in depositories in Poland and the United States, said Chrystian Tejedor, American Red Cross spokesman. They also use museum and other archive records.

The search was complicated in that Weinberg had married and changed her name, and moved from Germany to Israel to Canada.

Eventually the Red Cross made the connection and Weinberg scrambled to renew her passport.

It turns out the cousins were closer all along than Dreier imagined: Weinberg's son owns a condo in Hollywood that she has visited.

Weinberg said she was stunned to know there was going to be a reunion.

When asked what they planned to do now that they're together again, Dreier said: "Talk, talk, talk."

SURVIVORS' CORNER

SEPARATED AFTER THE HOLOCAUST, REUNITED BY FACEBOOK

It was a tale of World War II, concentration camps, death marches, starvation — and Facebook.

BY AMY SPIRO, THE JEWISH WEEK

Amid tears, laughter and hugs, three Holocaust survivors — childhood friends from the same hometown of *Hajdúdorog*, Hungary — reunited for the first time in 65 years in New Jersey. Though they have fond memories of playing on a soccer team together, their strongest bonds developed in 1945, as they were struggling to survive on a three-week death march from the Russian front to the *Mauthausen* concentration camp in Austria. One of them saved the other's life.

The five Rosenfeld brothers — Jack, Marty, Joe, Max and Abie — were rounded up in Hungary in 1944 and brought to the ghetto in the neighboring town of *Debrecen*. Like 70 percent of Hungary's Jews, they were set on a train to Auschwitz. Somehow, they — along with their friend and neighbor Imre Mayer — were diverted to Vienna, where they were placed in a forced labor camp. It was then that they were separated: Jack and Marty were sent with Mayer to the Russian front, to dig trenches to trap oncoming tanks. Joe, Max and Abie, the youngest brothers, remained behind in Vienna.

"We were there to clean debris and pick up body pieces," said Joe Rosenfeld, now 79. The city was under constant bombing attacks from Allied forces. This work continued until 1945, when the surviving Jews were set on a death march to *Mauthausen*, a concentration camp over 100 miles

away. "Half of the people died," said Joe. "We were starving, we had no food — once in a while we had a little dirty water. I was shot," he said, pointing to a scar on his hand.

Jack, Marty and Imre Mayer were also marching to *Mauthausen*, from a city on the Austria-Hungary border. "We were there close to a year without heat," said Jack. "We ate soup with worms in it." But in March 1945 they started out on a three-week trek to the *Mauthausen* camp. Weakened from a year of hard labor and starvation, Mayer was struggling to continue walking. "We were without food, without water, without anything," said Jack. "He said to me and Marty, 'I am not going anymore,' he sat down." For three days, Jack and Marty carried their friend, saving his life, until they reached their destination.

"If you didn't continue in the march," said Mayer, who now goes by Amram Meir, the Hebraized version of his name, "then that's it, they shot you in the head."

When they reached *Mauthausen*, they encountered the Rosenfelds' other three brothers, Joe, Max and Abie, who all managed to survive the war. In May 1945, the remaining guards at the camp rigged the barracks with dynamite, intending to ignite it when Russian or American forces got close. But the night that it was set to explode, the charges malfunctioned, saving the lives of the almost 80,000 inmates. The next day, American soldiers liberated the camp. After liberation, the families — which both had survived intact with their siblings and parents — recovered in hospitals before going their

separate ways. The Rosenfelds moved to the United States, Meir immigrated to Israel, and the friends lost touch completely.

"I've been trying to get a hold of him for 65 years," said Jack, now 81, who previously hired investigators that were unsuccessful in tracking down his friend. Instead the hero of the day was 15-year-old Michael Rosenfeld, Jack's great-nephew and the grandson of Marty —



Jack Rosenfeld, left, along with his brother Joseph, middle, reunites with a friend, Amram Meir, right, after 65 years of thinking he perished while at the concentration camps.

who died in 1992. "He is a genius with the computer," said Jack. After being set to the task by his grandmother, Michael, a sophomore at Rambam Mesivta High School in Long Island, managed to locate Meir's niece on Facebook, the popular social networking site.

"I sent her a message and said 'Do you have an uncle Imre Mayer?'" said Michael. The next day she responded, "Yes, I do," providing Michael with his phone number in Toronto. And she also had to ask — "How did you find me?"

The answer is that it wasn't easy, especially with Meir having changed his Hungarian name, but weeks of web searching uncovered a family tree linking Meir with his niece, Ruth Szinai-Witty. "I didn't think there was anyone else with that name," said Michael. The Facebook exchange occurred last November, and the reunion was planned for this summer, when Meir visited his son Gadi, who lives in nearby Montclair, N.J.

"I've heard about these boys for years and years," said Gadi, who was eager to hear stories from the two brothers. Gadi was also interested in what else Michael uncovered in his searching — a Swiss bank account in Meir's father's name.

"The Internet connects everything together," said Michael. "Even from 65 years ago, even though he changed his name."

And 65 years after they parted, Joe, Jack and Amram were reunited at Jack's house in Teaneck, N.J. On a sunny Monday afternoon, surrounded by their children and grandchildren and a spread of roast beef, salads, and fruit, the old friends hugged and cried as they reminisced about their childhoods and caught up on the past six decades.

"He was so excited for this," said Lisa Rosenfeld, of her father Joe. The day was "very emotional" for him, said Joe.

Among the three of them, they have 10 children, dozens of grandchildren and a handful of great-grandchildren, many of them present for the reunion.

"The last time I saw him was in *Mauthausen*. I was 16," said Meir, now 81. "They look the same. Identical."

THE PAST IS PRESENT

BY SUSANNE ALTHOFF,
THE BOSTON GLOBE

Dr. Michael Grodin, who's spent the past 33 years studying the Holocaust and other atrocities, stumbled on an unusual bit of history during a trip to Israel in the summer of 2009. The discovery was a museum exhibit featuring a literary magazine called *Kamarad* — produced by the boys confined by the Nazis in Building Q609 in a Jewish ghetto/camp in the former Czechoslovakia from 1943 to 1944. The magazine issues, created without adult supervision or censorship, were filled with stories about wilderness adventures, pranks, and soccer matches. The boys, ages 12 to 14, patched together the magazines from scraps of paper. All 22 editions, rendered in neat penmanship, have survived.

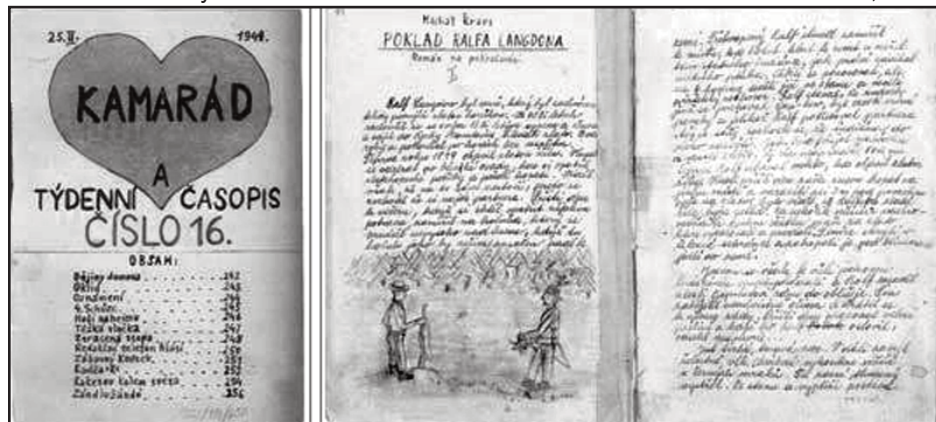
The story of *Kamarad* alone was enough to pique Grodin's interest. "This is pretty incredible stuff," says Grodin, a professor of psychiatry, family medicine, and human rights at Boston University. He was impressed that the boys had created an outlet that let them explore their fantasies and cope with the hardships of the Holocaust.

Then Grodin noticed something else incredible. The exhibit noted that one of the creators of *Kamarad* — believed to be the sole survivor — was living in Brookline, Massachusetts. "There I was in the middle of nowhere, in northern Israel, and the guy lives like three blocks from my house."

Back at home, Grodin looked up Michael Kraus and gave him a call. The two men began meeting at Kraus's home, accompanied by a few of Grodin's colleagues, and the result over the last year has been a warm relationship that goes beyond researcher and subject.

Susie Rodenstein, a lecturer in Jewish education and early childhood education at

Czechoslovakia to *Theresienstadt*, a ghetto/camp from which many were ultimately transported to death chambers. Kraus was 12, and an only child. His family left behind a comfortable existence — father Karel had been a physician — for a crowded collection of buildings inside fortress walls. Incredibly, *Theresienstadt* came to be known for its cultural life, which



One of the 22 issues of *Kamarad*.

Hebrew College in Newton, is one of two researchers helping Grodin examine *Kamarad*. "Mind-boggling" is how she describes the coincidence of Grodin and Kraus both living in Brookline. "That alone made it feel like it was meant to be, that we all get to discover and get to know this man," she says. "I think his story and his experience is a treasure for us."

On December 14, 1942, the Nazis sent Kraus and his parents from their home in *Nachod* in the former

included concerts, theater, art, and poetry readings. These were a genuine expression of the inmates, but were also capitalized upon by the Nazis for propaganda purposes. Living conditions were poor, food was scarce, and illness was common. After staying in two different buildings, Kraus was transferred to a room in Q609, occupied by about two dozen 12-, 13-, and 14-year-old boys sleeping on three-level bunk beds. Here Kraus was reunited with Ivan Polak, a friend from *Nachod*.

It was in Q609 that Polak hatched the idea of *Kamarad*, or "friend." Czech-speaking boys in the room would submit stories, some fictional, some true. Polak would recopy them and add illustrations, and his mother would bind the pages with string. The first issue appeared October 29, 1943. At Friday evening Sabbath gatherings, Polak would read from new editions of the magazine to entertain his bunkmates. Kraus says Polak complained when copies were borrowed but not returned and when he couldn't find willing contributors. "He singled me out as one of the most diligent collaborators," Kraus says.

The boys didn't sugarcoat their experiences. They wrote about the near starvation and illnesses experienced in *Theresienstadt* and the punishment meted out to everyone when someone attempted to escape. They also wrote about the petty arguments they had with one another.

Kraus's offerings included a poem about a mouse that rescues a captured lion ("It is not the size that matters; And even a tiny mouse can be a savior") and the serialized fictional story "The Treasure of Ralph Langdon," about trappers looking for fortune in the Canadian northwest. Kraus remembers that he and Polak "did fantasize about having not an empire but a territory in the northwest part of Canada near the Great Slave Lake. . . . And I think that my article was kind of a replay of this." Rodenstein believes the Langdon story provided
(Continued on page 14)

HOW ONE POLISH WOMAN UNCOVERED HER TOWN'S SHOCKING ROLE IN THE HOLOCAUST

In a dark corner of Poland that refuses to acknowledge its horrific treatment of Jews, an amateur photographer is reopening old wounds by tracing ghosts in her home town.

BY MARK S. SMITH, THE HERALD

Katarzyna Markusz focuses her lens and all her attention on a concrete slab at the far edge of a neighbor's yard in *Sokolow Podlaski*. She squints her eyes as she presses the shutter button. It seems she cannot stop taking photographs of this small town in the Polish hinterland.

It is June and I have come here to see Markusz's exhibition of photographs in a cafe next to the town's cultural center. The exhibition, entitled *Missing*, has focused attention on a raw nerve – *Sokolow's* Jewish heritage.

Markusz, a 28-year-old amateur photographer and mother of Michal, nine, and Andrzej, two, began researching the history of the town for her exhibition in 2009 and it has taken over her life.

Like her photographs, there is an air of sadness about Markusz. Her husband cannot fathom her obsession with the Jews who once inhabited this town 80 kilometers east of Warsaw, one of whom was Joseph Rubenstein, the father of Lee Harvey Oswald's killer, Jack Ruby. In *Sokolow*, where Markusz's family has lived for generations, most of the Jews – with few exceptions – were murdered in 1942, after being transported on death trains to the Nazis' notorious *Treblinka* extermination camp, an hour's drive north.

"This is what I wanted to show you," she says, taking another photograph. "It's a kind of monument, but there is human ash underneath, and bones." The evidence concealed marks a terrible and barbarous incident that will forever haunt *Sokolow*. The slab is the site of a mass grave, identified by Markusz after extensive research, unexhumed and undocumented. It is also significant as another piece of the Holocaust jigsaw. But this town, like many in Poland, would rather not remind itself that it conducts its daily life upon the graveyard of its murdered neighbors.

Tears begin to well in Markusz's eyes. "I'm sorry," she says. She lets the camera drop and swing around her neck. "I'm crying for them. I'm crying for me. I don't know why I'm crying. I'm crying maybe because my husband doesn't understand what I am doing. Once he said he wanted to put me in a psychiatric hospital. I was scared. He says it's more than a fascination. He says it's a sickness."

Except for the Stalinesque uniformity of its residential tower blocks, parts of *Sokolow* – its old market squares and streets – remain much as they were, echoing the multicultural town it once was. One feature of *Sokolow* stands out, though – its proximity to the railway line, which is laden with gruesome symbolism.

Besides the exhibition, I have come here to try to understand modern Poland's schizophrenic attitude toward its past and to see if its notorious homegrown anti-Semitism has survived into the 21st century.

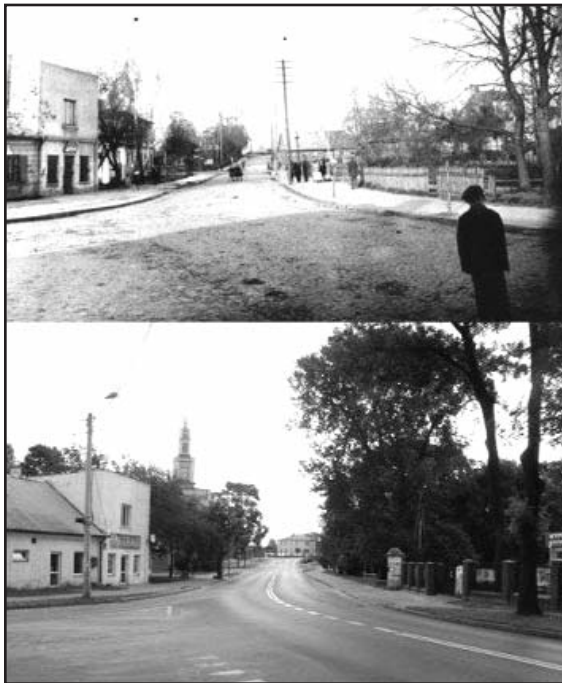
Poland is experiencing an extraordinary revival of Jewish interest. Not only have small Jewish communities sprung to life in major cities, but *Krakow* now holds an annual Jewish festival, and Jewish-interest

books crowd shop windows in Warsaw – unthinkable two decades ago. It is a phenomenon that divides Poland, its towns and communities, and even Markusz's marriage. Here, amid the former killing fields of the Nazis, fascination contends with denial and guilt.

Markusz's work is part of the revival. She hopes soon to exhibit her work in *Krakow* and the UK. Its special significance though is here, because she is an ordinary Polish woman, bringing her country's Jewish past before the eyes of this ordinary town.

Among a total population of 40 million there are an estimated 25,000 Jews in Poland today – a fraction of the 3.5 million that lived in the country in 1939 before the Nazi onslaught – and none in *Sokolow*. Despite the statistics, Jews loom large in the Polish imagination.

The day before I arrive in *Sokolow*, Malgosia Kowalska from Warsaw's remnant Jewish community advises caution. "This is the middle of the most anti-Semitic area in Poland," she says. "It's what we call Poland B." Poland B? "It's how we explain the contradictions. There are no shades of grey here. It's like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Poland A and B are mindsets – but they are also geographical entities. Poland A is everything to the west of the *Vistula* river, where the people embrace new ideas. It is the bright, forward-looking part of the country. But Poland B – east of the *Vistula* – is our dark side, full of suspicion, racism and revenge. Anti-Semitic priests still hold



Sokolow then and now.

power in many towns. My great-grandfather was a shoemaker from *Sokolow*. Believe me, *Sokolow* is right in the middle of Poland B. Be careful."

Although anti-Semitism still thrives in Poland B, there have been no Jews in *Sokolow* for two generations. The anti-Semites have no idea what a Jew looks like.

Nonetheless, Jewish communities have existed on Polish soil for 1,000 years, and although intermarriage was limited, 10 centuries of coexistence have left their mark. One recent study notes that Poles today have a 90% chance that at least one of their ancestors is Jewish. Markusz, as far as she knows, has no Jewish ancestors.

"The whole center of *Sokolow* was built by Jews," she says. "Now there is nothing, not even a sign, to say they were ever here. The old Jewish cemetery is now Red

Cross Park. There is a swimming pool there and a building where people have wedding parties – on top of the old graves. People don't want to think about that, but I find it scary."

In the cafe, a few Sokolowers study the exhibition. Like Poland's national psyche, her exhibits are split. The exhibition comprises 68 photographs – but in each frame



Katarzyna Markusz points out a terrace made using gravestones from a Jewish cemetery.

there are two pictures. There are 34 pictures of *Sokolow* from the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s coupled with 34 of her own photographs, taken over the past year and, as nearly as possible, captured from the same vantage point of the earlier pictures.

According to a 1931 census, *Sokolow* had 5,027 Jewish residents out of a total population of 9,918. Many of the old photographs are therefore images of *Sokolow's* Jewish past. Markusz's pictures show empty buildings and townscapes, hence the title – *Missing*. "It began when my husband showed me old photographs he got from a friend," she says. "I started thinking about the changes, whether they were better or worse. I concluded they were worse. The old buildings were beautiful.

"But I also began to look at the faces of people in the old pictures. Many were Jews, and I thought, 'These people would have been my neighbors and I'll never have the chance to know them.' *Sokolow* was once multicultural. Many people here are happy the Jews have gone, but I think our lives are poorer without them. Soon their buildings will be gone, too, because developers will demolish them. The town authorities, which have no love of *Sokolow's* Jewish history, have refused to protect them. Instead, they invent nationalist myths about *Sokolow's* pure Polish past.

"Before the end of the year, the old *Beit Midrash*, the place where religious Jews studied Talmud and Torah for more than a hundred years, will be bulldozed and something new will be put there," she says. "There are a lot of old buildings like this. I photograph them for history. But when I look at my photographs, I feel emptiness."

You are saving history by telling the truth, I tell her. They say truth sets you free.

Markusz looks straight at me. "The truth is, I can't find work in *Sokolow* because of what I'm doing. No one will employ me."

One of Markusz's pictures shows a Jewish barber, Icek Potok, outside his shop in the late 1920s, during the relative tolerance of the Jozef Pilsudski dictatorship. Polish and Jewish pedestrians walk beside the cobbled street, beneath ornate balconies. Below the picture is the street as it looks today, its smooth surface designed for modern transport. The architecture of the street is the same, but the building facades are covered with concrete and half the balconies are gone.

Another photograph from the winter of

(Continued on page 15)

GERMANY'S FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS COMPLICIT IN HOLOCAUST

Germany's Foreign Ministry was far more involved in the murder of millions of Jews than previously thought, according to a government study.

A report reveals that diplomats actively assisted the Nazis in their campaign of genocide against the Jews, contradicting post-war attempts to portray Germany's wartime Foreign Ministry in a positive light.

"The Foreign Ministry actively supported all measures of persecution, rights deprivation, expulsions and the Holocaust," Eckart Conze, one of four historians asked to investigate the role played by the ministry in the Holocaust, told the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*.

"The Foreign Ministry was actively involved in every operation to persecute, strip away the rights of, expel and exterminate the Jews from the very beginning," Conze said.

Conze, who spent five years researching diplomatic archives, also condemned the ministry during wartime as a "criminal organization" in the German news magazine *Spiegel*.

Conze said postwar claims that officials within the ministry had resisted Nazi policies were untrue. In fact, he said, the ministry had often been proactive in its efforts to carry out the will of the Third Reich leadership.

The study, commissioned in 2005 by former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, looked at the activities of the ministry between 1933 and 1945.

Fischer was quoted by the newspaper as saying that he was "horrified" by the level of support and advice offered by the ministry to help war-crime suspects escape Germany after the country's defeat.

"As I read this report, I became more and more shocked," said Fischer.

Among the documents was a paper from the official responsible for Jewish affairs, Franz Rademacher, citing the "liquidation of Jews in Belgrade" as a reason for one of his foreign trips.

The American Gathering of Holocaust Survivors and Their Descendants hailed the report, saying it "categorically refuted" previous attempts to sanitize the Foreign Ministry's role in the Holocaust.

"Germany has taken an honest and painful look at its past," said the group's president Elan Steinberg in a statement. "This report is a pointed reminder of the broad cross section of German society and institutions which were implicated in the Holocaust and the brutalities of the Nazi regime."

It was also revealed that Ernst von Weizsaecker, who was secretary of state at the ministry from 1938 to 1943, had pressed for the removal of German citizenship from author Thomas Mann in 1936. Weizsaecker, father of former German President Richard von Weizsaecker, was said to be in favor of the action because of Mann's "hostile propaganda" against the Third Reich.

Weizsaecker, who after the war was tried for crimes against humanity for alleged complicity in the deportation of French Jews to Auschwitz, claimed he had always worked against the Nazis. He was sentenced to seven years in prison in 1949, but died two years later.

The ministry's role has long been controversial because many Nazi-era diplomats continued to work for the ministry after 1945 – many claiming they had always been opposed to Hitler's regime.

NAZIS WERE GIVEN "SAFE HAVEN" IN U.S., REPORT SAYS

BY ERIC LICHTBLAU,
THE NEW YORK TIMES

A secret history of the United States government's Nazi-hunting operation concludes that American intelligence officials created a "safe haven" in the United States for Nazis and their collaborators after World War II, and it details decades of clashes, often hidden, with other nations over war criminals here and abroad.

The 600-page report, which the Justice Department has tried to keep secret for four years, provides new evidence about more than two dozen of the most notorious Nazi cases of the last three decades.

It describes the government's posthumous pursuit of Dr. Josef Mengele, the so-called Angel of Death at Auschwitz, part of whose scalp was kept in a Justice Department official's drawer; the vigilante killing of a former Waffen SS soldier in New Jersey; and the government's mistaken identification of the *Treblinka* concentration camp guard known as Ivan the Terrible.

The report catalogs both the successes and failures of the band of lawyers, historians and investigators at the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, which was created in 1979 to deport Nazis.

Perhaps the report's most damning disclosures come in assessing the Central Intelligence Agency's involvement with Nazi émigrés. Scholars and previous government reports had acknowledged the C.I.A.'s use of Nazis for postwar intelligence purposes. But this report goes further in documenting the level of American complicity and deception in such operations.

The Justice Department report, describing what it calls "the government's collab-

oration with persecutors," says that O.S.I. investigators learned that some of the Nazis "were indeed knowingly granted entry" to the United States, even though government officials were aware of their pasts. "America, which prided itself on being a safe haven for the persecuted, became — in some small measure — a safe haven for persecutors as well," it said.

search group, the National Security Archive, but even then many of the most legally and diplomatically sensitive portions were omitted. A complete version was obtained by *The New York Times*.

The Justice Department said the report, the product of six years of work, was never formally completed and did not represent its official findings. It cited "nu-



Dr. Josef Mengele in 1956, left. Arthur Rudolph, center, in 1990, was a rocket scientist for Nazi Germany and NASA. John Demjanjuk in 2006, right.

The report also documents divisions within the government over the effort and the legal pitfalls in relying on testimony from Holocaust survivors that was decades old. The report also concluded that the number of Nazis who made it into the United States was almost certainly much smaller than 10,000, the figure widely cited by government officials.

The Justice Department has resisted making the report public since 2006. Under the threat of a lawsuit, it turned over a heavily redacted version to a private re-

search group, the National Security Archive, but even then many of the most legally and diplomatically sensitive portions were omitted. A complete version was obtained by *The New York Times*.

merous factual errors and omissions," but declined to say what they were. More than 300 Nazi persecutors have been deported, stripped of citizenship or blocked from entering the United States since the creation of the O.S.I. In chronicling the cases of Nazis who were aided by American intelligence officials, the report cites help that C.I.A. officials provided in 1954 to Otto Von Bolschwing, an associate of Adolf Eichmann who had helped develop the initial plans "to purge Germany of the Jews" and who later worked for the

C.I.A. in the United States. In a chain of memos, C.I.A. officials debated what to do if Von Bolschwing were confronted about his past — whether to deny any Nazi affiliation or "explain it away on the basis of extenuating circumstances," the report said.

The Justice Department, after learning of Von Bolschwing's Nazi ties, sought to deport him in 1981. He died that year at age 72.

The report also examines the case of Arthur L. Rudolph, a Nazi scientist who ran the Mittelwerk munitions factory. He was brought to the United States in 1945 for his rocket-making expertise under Operation Paperclip, an American program that recruited scientists who had worked in Nazi Germany. (Rudolph has been honored by NASA and is credited as the father of the Saturn V rocket.)

The report cites a 1949 memo from the Justice Department's No. 2 official urging immigration officers to let Rudolph back in the country after a stay in Mexico, saying that a failure to do so "would be to the detriment of the national interest."

Justice Department investigators later found evidence that Rudolph was much more actively involved in exploiting slave laborers at Mittelwerk than he or American intelligence officials had acknowledged, the report says.

Some intelligence officials objected when the Justice Department sought to deport him in 1983, but the O.S.I. considered the deportation of someone of Rudolph's prominence as an affirmation of "the depth of the government's commitment to the Nazi prosecution program," according to internal memos.

The Justice Department itself sometimes concealed what American officials knew

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MAKER OF SHOAH STRESSES ITS LASTING VALUE

BY LARRY ROHTER,
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Even at 85, Claude Lanzmann is not one to rest on his laurels or shirk a controversy. A quarter of a century after his documentary *Shoah* transformed the way the world regarded the Holocaust, the film was rereleased earlier this year in the United States — an event he welcomes as long overdue.

Then again, Mr. Lanzmann also argues that *Shoah* is not really a documentary, and that "Holocaust" is "a completely improper name" to describe the Nazis' extermination of six million Jews during World War II. He complains that, in contrast to Europe, where *Shoah* has "never stopped being shown in movie theaters and on TV," his film has "disappeared from the American scene," elbowed aside by more palatable fare and thus allowing mistaken notions to propagate.

"This was by no means a holocaust," he said during a recent visit to New York, noting that the literal meaning of the word refers to a burnt offering to a god. "To reach God 1.5 million Jewish children have been offered? The name is important, and one doesn't say 'Holocaust' in Europe. This was a catastrophe, a disaster, and in Hebrew that is *shoah*."

Mr. Lanzmann is a French Jew who joined the Resistance as a teenager and later served as an editor of *Les Temps Modernes*, the cultural and philosophical journal founded by Jean-Paul Sartre. Though no members of his own family perished in the Holocaust, he said, the event

latched hold of him when he began to make his film in 1973.

"After I started, I could not stop," he said, even after the withdrawal of his original backers. "I was like a blind man during the 12 years of the making of *Shoah*, like a horse with blinders. I could not look right or left, only straight ahead into the black circle of the *shoah*."

Clocking in at just over nine and a quarter hours, *Shoah* is drawn from more than 300 hours of film. *Shoah* should not be considered a documentary, he said, because "I did not record a reality that pre-existed the film, I had to create that reality," out of what he calls "a kind of chorus of emerging voices and faces, of so many killers, victims and bystanders."

In addition, Mr. Lanzmann chose not to use any historical footage in his film. But whatever genre *Shoah* belongs to, it has become the benchmark for visual representations of the Holocaust.

"The words monumental and profound are overused, but in the case of this film, they are appropriate," said Sara Bloomfield, director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

"For those of us who spend our time thinking about this," she added, "there is something this film does that is utterly

unique, almost as if it looks into the abyss and penetrates it, in ways that I don't think anything else has done."

Since *Shoah* was released in 1985, of course, numerous films fictionalizing various aspects of the Holocaust have been issued to critical and commercial success, including a pair of Academy Award winners: Roberto Benigni's *Life Is Beautiful*, of which Mr. Lanzmann is dismissive, and Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, which he sees as pernicious in its impact and influence.

"I dislike deeply *Schindler's List*, for many reasons," he said. The Spielberg film is "much more easy to see than *Shoah*, it is very sentimental."

"It's false," he added, because it offers an uplifting ending. He also questioned the value of Mr. Spielberg's underwriting of 105,000 hours of videotaped testimonies from concentration camp survivors and others in 56 countries, asking, "Who will see this?" (The testimonials are currently not widely available to the public, but are in the process of being digitized, with index, and being made accessible as a study collection.)

Asked for comment, Marvin Levy, a spokesman for Mr. Spielberg, referred a reporter to Stephen Smith, a British scholar who is the executive director of the Shoah



The French writer and documentary filmmaker Claude Lanzmann.

Foundation Institute at the University of Southern California, which Mr. Spielberg founded and supports. Mr. Smith said he regarded the two films as "complementary, rather than contradictory" or antagonistic.

"*Shoah* took me into a deep, silent and reflective space and was an important milestone in my learning," he said. "*Schindler's List* showed me it was possible to take the Holocaust to the general public and move it into thinking more deeply about what the Holocaust was."

Mr. Lanzmann is similarly impatient with efforts to explain the Holocaust. "To ask why the Jews have been killed is a question that shows immediately its own obscenity," he said. The Italian writer and Holocaust survivor Primo Levi, he notes, wrote of the concentration camp guard who brusquely told him, "Hier ist kein warum," or "Here there is no why."

The political, moral and media landscape of the world has also changed considerably since the original release of *Shoah*. On the one hand, entities ranging from the government of Iran to the Institute for Historical Review openly promote Holocaust denial; on the other, more recent genocides in Bosnia, Rwanda and Darfur may have lessened the Holocaust's aura of uniqueness or even its power to shock.

"With the passage of time, memories fade, witnesses disappear, and with that comes the whole manifestation of trivialization," said Abraham H. Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League. "To most kids growing up today, Hitler could be Genghis Khan. People talk about 'soup

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ART'S SURVIVORS OF HITLER'S WAR

BY MICHAEL KIMMELMAN,
THE NEW YORK TIMES

The past still thrusts itself back into the headlines here in Berlin, occasionally as an unexploded bomb turning up somewhere. Now it has reappeared as art.

In January workers digging for a new subway station near City Hall unearthed a bronze bust of a woman, rusted, filthy, and



"A Likeness of the Actress Anni Mewes," by Edwin Scharff, is among the pieces found this year during excavations in Berlin.

almost unrecognizable. It tumbled off the shovel of their front-loader.

Researchers learned the bust was a portrait by Edwin Scharff, a nearly forgotten German modernist, from around 1920. It seemed anomalous until August, when more sculpture emerged nearby: "Standing Girl" by Otto Baum, "Dancer" by Marg Moll, and the remains of a head by Otto Freundlich. Excavators also rescued another fragment, a different head, belonging to Emy Roeder's "Pregnant Woman." October produced yet a further batch.

The 11 sculptures proved to be survivors of Hitler's campaign against what the Nazis notoriously called "degenerate art." Several works, records showed, were seized from German museums in the 1930s, paraded in the fateful "Degenerate Art" show, and in a couple of cases also exploited for a 1941 Nazi film, an anti-Semitic comedy lambasting modern art. They were last known to have been stored in the depot of the *Reichspropagandaministerium*, which organized the "Degenerate" show.

Then the sculptures vanished.

How they ended up underground near City Hall is still a mystery; it seems to involve an Oskar Schindler-like hero. Meanwhile a modest exhibition of the discoveries has been organized and recently opened at the Neues Museum, Berlin's archaeological collection, the perfect site for these works.

Like the sculptures, the museum lately rose, all these years later, from the ruins of war. In the architect David Chipperfield's ingenious, Humpty Dumpty-like reconstruction of the

building, it has become a popular palimpsest of German history, bearing witness, via the evidence of the damage done to it, to a violence that not even time and several generations have been able to erase.

I can hardly express how moving this little show is, unexpectedly so. Its effect ends up being all out of proportion to the objects discovered, which are, in strictly aesthetic terms, fine but not remarkable. They are works of quasi-Cubism or Expressionism, mostly not much more than a foot high, several newly cleaned but still scarred, inspiring the obvious human analogy.

The poet and Holocaust survivor Paul Celan came up, in a different context, with

the metaphor of bottles tossed into the ocean "at the shoreline of the heart," now finally washed ashore. They're like the dead, these sculptures, ever coming back to us, radiant ghosts.

In a country that for decades has been profoundly diligent at disclosing its own crimes and framing them in the context of history, it makes sense that the exhibition was installed

to share a courtyard with Assyrian friezes from a long-ago regime that made an art of totalitarian rule and with an ancient frieze describing the eruption of Vesuvius, which preserved priceless objects, buried in the ash, that have found sanctuary in institutions like the Neues Museum.

Archaeologists have so far determined that the recovered works must have come from 50 *Königstrasse*, across the street from City Hall. The building belonged to a Jewish woman, Edith Steinitz; several Jewish lawyers are listed as her tenants in 1939, but their names disappear from the record by 1942, when the house became property of the Reich. Among its subsequent occupants, German investigators now believe, the likeliest candidate to have hidden the art was Erhard Oewerdieck, a tax lawyer and escrow agent.

Oewerdieck is not widely known, but he is remembered at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial in Israel. In 1939, he and his wife gave money to a Jewish family to escape to Shanghai. He also hid an employee, Martin Lange, in his apartment. In 1941 he helped the historian Eugen Täubler and his wife flee to America, preserving part of Täubler's library. And he stood by Wolfgang Abendroth



"Hagar" by Karl Knappe. From left: the original bronze; the condition when discovered; and as it appears now, cleaned and on display at Berlin's Neues Museum.

too, a leftist and Nazi opponent, by writing him a job recommendation when that risked his own life.

The current theory is that when fire from Allied air raids in 1944 consumed 50 *Königstrasse*, the contents of Oew-

erdieck's office fell through the floor, and then the building collapsed on top. Tests are being done on ash from the site for remains of incinerated paintings and wood sculptures. How the lost art came into Oewerdieck's possession in the first place still isn't clear.

But at least it's now back on view. Scharff's bust, of an actress named Anni Mewes, brings to mind Egyptian works in the Neues Museum. Karl Knappe's "Hagar," a bronze from 1923, twisted like knotted rope, has been left with its green patina of rust and rubble, making it almost impossible to decipher, save as evidence of its fate. On the other hand, Freundlich's "Head," from 1925, a work made of glazed terra cotta, gnarled like an old olive tree, loses little of its power for being broken. The Nazis seized the Freundlich from a museum in Hamburg in 1937, then six years later, in France, seized the artist and sent him to *Majdanek*, the concentration camp in Poland, where he was murdered on the day he arrived.



Marg Moll's "Dancer," from around 1930, is one of the found works in the "Degenerate Art" show at the Neues Museum in Berlin.

Across the street from the Neues Museum contemporary galleries showcase the sort of work the Nazis hoped to eradicate but that instead give Berlin its current identity as a capital of cool. This is a city that resembles the young masses who gravitate here: forever in a state of becoming, wary, unsure and unresolved, generally broke, but optimistic about the future, with the difference that Germany can't escape its past.

Farther down the block the Deutsches Historisches Museum's Hitler exhibition, today's version of a "Degenerate" show, means to warn viewers about succumbing to what present German law declares morally reprehensible. How could any decent German have ever been taken in? the show asks.

That happens to be the question the Nazis' "Degenerate" show posed about modern art. Many more Germans visited that exhibition than the concurrent one of approved German art. Maybe Oewerdieck was among those who went to the modern show and saw these sculptures in it. In any case, today's Germany has salvaged them and has organized this display. Redemption sometimes comes late and in small measures.

IN THE NAME OF THE MOTHER: ASHES GO TO TREBLINKA

Alex Werber calmly strode toward a patch of black stones, pulled up his sleeves and opened a plastic bag to dump out its contents.

"Goodbye, mom," he said, scattering her ashes at the former site of the *Treblinka* death camp in Poland, where the Nazis murdered 875,000 Jews during World War II.

It was Lucy Werber's final wish: to have her body cremated, her ashes taken to Poland and sprinkled at the death camp that killed her entire family, a fate she narrowly avoided when she was a young girl.

"She remained a child who just wanted to be with her parents," Werber said. "She never made it to *Treblinka*, but she probably felt that was where she needed to go."

The ceremony capped an emotional journey that forced Werber to explore his family's dark history and vividly illustrated *Treblinka's* notorious place in the Jewish psyche.

The camp is perhaps the most blatant example of the "Final Solution," the Nazi plot to rid Europe of its Jews. It was designed with the sole intention of exterminating Jews, as opposed to others that had at least a facade of being prison or labor camps. *Treblinka's* victims were transported there in cattle cars and gassed to death almost immediately upon arrival.

In all, the Nazis and their collaborators killed about 6 million Jews during the Holocaust. The death toll at *Treblinka* was second only to Auschwitz — a prison camp where more than a million people died in gas chambers or from starvation, disease and forced labor.

Only a few dozen prisoners managed to escape *Treblinka*. The Associated Press recently interviewed two men who are believed by experts to be the last two survivors.

Thanks to her parents, Lucy Werber managed to avoid being sent to *Treblinka*. But the camp haunted her until her final days, her son said.

Born in Poland, she spent the bulk of the war in the Warsaw ghetto. Her son called her a "natural survivor" who knew how to sneak out of the ghetto and smuggle in food for her parents and baby brother. In 1943, just before the family was deported to *Treblinka*, Lucy's parents paid a Polish family to hide their 9-year-old daughter in a cellar. Of her parents, brother, and extended family, she alone survived the war.

After the war, Lucy was put in an orphanage in southern Poland. Later, she married a fellow survivor, became a teacher, and had Alex in 1955. Two years later, the family moved to Israel, where Lucy had another child and worked in a library and in book publishing.

Raising her family in Israel, Lucy spoke little of her own childhood experiences. It was only when she became ill that Werber, a 55-year-old accountant, learned of her unusual will. A longtime smoker, she died of lung failure in May at the age of 77. Her husband died 38 years ago and is buried in Israel.

"She was a very stubborn, opinionated person who knew what she wanted," he said.

At first he said he was "insulted" that she did not want to be buried in her home in Israel, close to her grandchildren. After she died, when he was sorting through

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REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

“WE ARE ALL ALIVE BECAUSE OF HER”

Grandson receives Righteous Among the Nations medal on behalf of Teodora Olszewska, who risked her life to save eight Jewish family members.

BY OLGA GOURESKY, YNETNEWS.COM

Staszek Olszewski and his wife, who are visiting from Lithuania, have been busy touring Israel's historic sites in the past few days. “I fell in love with Israel,” Staszek said with a smile.



The Nomkin family before the war.

“I am very excited because I saw things that I haven't seen anywhere else in the world, like places with high significance to human history; the landscapes, Jerusalem – there are no words to describe it,” he said with exuberance.

But history also has a darker side, which makes Staszek's story especially touching and unique.

As part of his trip to Israel, Olszewski visited Jerusalem, where he received the

Righteous Among the Nations medal and certificate in a special ceremony.

Olszewski was honored on behalf of his grandmother Teodora Olszewska, her mother and her brothers, who risked their lives to save Jews during the war.

The offspring of the family members rescued by the Olszewskis also attended the ceremony, and surrounded Staszek and his wife while they were honored at Yad Vashem.

During the Second World War, Gita Nomkin and her 13 children, who lost their father prior to the war, resided near Vilna, Lithuania's capital, which was within Poland's borders at the time.

In 1941 Nazi forces occupied the area, and concentrated all the Jewish families in two ghettos, one of which was located in the town of Szarkowszczyzna.

On July 18 1942 the Nazis liquidated Szarkowszczyzna ghetto. In the process, some 700 Jews managed to escape to the forest, including five of Gita's children and their spouses.

Gita and her eight other children were murdered by the Nazis along with 1,200 other Jews.

The five brothers who survived – Martin, Hirsch, Yehuda, Yehudit, and Esther Nomkin – went through many hardships until finally reaching an old family friend: Teodora Olszewska.

Teodora hid the brothers and their spouses for almost two years, until in July 1943 they decided to join the Russian partisans in their struggle against the Nazis.

After the war, the brothers returned to live in the area until finally making aliyah.



Olszewski during ceremony.

However, the Nomkins and Olszewskis kept in touch throughout the years.

“Near grandmother's house there were several structures,” said Olszewski. “At night they hid, and in the day they sat and ate together. One time mother was interrogated and was told that a rumor was going around that she was concealing Jews. She acted as if she had no clue what they were talking about.”

Despite the denials, the rumors continued to circulate, and finally the Nazis came to search the bath house, which was one of the structures in the complex.

“When they came there were still plates on the table from the Nomkins' previous meal. One of the children managed to hide

them at the last moment, but the Germans stayed and watched over the area for the entire night,” he added.

Tova Levin, the daughter of Hirsch and his wife Michalina, both rescued thanks to Teodora's courage, accompanied Staszek and his wife during their visit to Israel.

“I met her when I was in first grade, and now, 57 years later, we meet again. My heart is beating out of my chest,” said Staszek in excitement, “She came to visit us in our house years ago. I am Polish, but we are very similar.”

Teodora Olszewska passed away in 1975. Her daughter and Staszek's mother, Anna, died in 2006 and Anna's brother, Kazimierz, passed back in 1946. The last living member of the older generation is Staszek's

aunt, Józefa, who lives in Vilna.

Levin, 64, also couldn't conceal her excitement. “Staszek's family rescued my family. We are all alive because of her. The last survivor who gave her testimony to Yad Vashem is my aunt, Haya, who is 89 years old. I am very excited by this unusual closure.”

“It's hard to believe that the third generation of rescuers are here and we are touring together. It's really the bare minimum we can do to repay them for their acts. Thanks to Teodora we are all here today. She was an unusual character and rescued eight people. They are Catholics and are very excited to tour the holy places,” Levin concluded.

HOLOCAUST ORPHANS REMINISCE ABOUT THE BIRNBAUM FAMILY

BY MELANIE LIDMAN, THE JERUSALEM POST

Twenty Holocaust survivors gathered at Yad Vashem last November to share testimony about the rescue efforts of the Birnbaum family, a German Jewish family which cared for over 350 children during the Holocaust and in the chaotic aftermath immediately following the war.

While Yad Vashem regularly records testimony from Holocaust survivors in their homes, this event allowed the museum to simultaneously gather testimony from many sides of the inspiring Birnbaum rescue story. The museum has only had the opportunity to gather group testimonies eight times in the past few years, since it is rare for an entire group of survivors to all be in Israel at the same time.

A deeply religious household, the Birnbaums fled from Berlin to Amsterdam following *Kristallnacht*, during which attacks were carried out against Jews in Germany and Austria, on November 9–10, 1938. In 1939, the family was moved with other German refugees to the *Westerbork* transit camp in Holland, where they tried to maintain a normal observant lifestyle as much as permitted.

Authorities put Yehoshua and Hani Birnbaum in charge of the orphans, who continued to arrive at the transit camp in large groups.

Deportations from *Westerbork* to concentration camps started in 1942. The family fought “like lions” to prevent each child's deportation, at one point saving 50 children from deportation by falsifying doc-

uments to state that the children were illegitimate offspring of Christian German soldiers and Jewish mothers.

In 1944, the family was deported, along with more than 200 orphans they cared for, to the *Bergen-Belsen* concentration camp. They tried to keep the orphaned children together despite terrible conditions in the camp.



Children in Bergen-Belsen. Photo taken by British upon arrival in 1945.

“For most of the war, I was with my family, but they died towards the end in *Bergen-Belsen*, so then I was taken in by the Birnbaum family,” recalled Esther Debora Reirs-Mossel, who was six years old at the time. “I remember they made a *seder* for us on March 29, 1945.

“I remember Ya'acov and Tzvi (two of the six biological Birnbaum children) baked *matzot* that night; they took some flour and water and made these *matzas*. And we had a real *seder* and we told the story about the holiday of liberation and getting out of Egypt. The next week, they

put us on a train. A death train. They put 2,500 people on there from *Bergen-Belsen*, and 10 percent died on the way.”

The Birnbaum family returned to Holland just a few months after the war ended. They settled into a monastery with around 40 children who had also survived, and continued to care for a growing number of orphans who found their way into the family's care. In 1946, groups of the Birnbaums' charges started coming to Israel through Youth Aliyah frameworks.

Today, all six of the Birnbaum children are living in Israel, as well as dozens of survivors whom the parents shepherded through the tumultuous and dangerous years.

The six Birnbaum children were at the testimony to hear the experiences of the dozens of children their parents helped to save.

“It's so exciting to be here,” said Soni (Birnbaum) Shai.

“There's Nehamia and there's Opie, there's people here I haven't seen in years. We don't have the opportunity to get together. It's just so exciting. I remember almost everyone.”

“They were angels in hell, rescuing hundreds of children,” said Reirs-Mossel. “Otto, his name is Yehoshua in Hebrew, he would wait for the trains to arrive at night and he would gather up all of the children that arrived.”

The survivors shared their stories of how they came to be under the care of the Birnbaums and what it meant to be part of the community in fragmented Europe. The youngest child rescued, Yehu-

dit Boldeheimer, came to the Birnbaums as a six-week-old infant with her twin.

Their father had been killed and their mother was unable to care for them.

“I remember taking care of you!” exclaimed Shai when she saw Boldeheimer.

“Testimonies are such a massive part of what we do,” said Estee Yaair, a spokeswoman for Yad Vashem. But the Birnbaum story stands out for the selflessness of the family in the face of such difficult conditions.

“In almost every story of survival, there's an example of Jews helping other Jews survive,” said Yaair.

The room was filled with family members of the survivors.

The idea for group testimony about the Birnbaum story surfaced during an event on Holocaust Remembrance Day this year, when Reirs-Mossel lit a candle and the museum screened a movie that showed dozens of the Birnbaum children.

The International School for Holocaust Studies decided to try and identify all of the children in the video, by bringing them together and hearing their stories. The testimony was organized in cooperation with the office of the Minister for Pensioner Affairs.

“I'm a member of a committee that researches Jews who rescued Jews,” explained Reirs-Mossel. “People usually try to correct me, saying, you mean Righteous Gentiles who rescued Jews. But until now, people haven't told the story enough of what Jews did to help the nation of Israel, and it's very important.”

SCHINDLER'S LIST: THE STORY BEHIND THE DOCUMENTS

BY MOSHE RONEN, YNETNEWS

It is one of the most talked-about historical documents from the Holocaust. A nine-page list consisting of 1,098 names of Jews – 801 men and 297 women – who were all saved because of the famous Righteous Among the Nations honoree Oskar Schindler.

Over the years this list became a symbol of courage during a very dark time for humanity, much accredited to the successful Hollywood film *Schindler's List* by director Steven Spielberg.

Now, 17 years after the movie premiered, the sensitive question is brought up once again: Who is the rightful owner of the real Schindler's list in the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem?

It's hard to overestimate the historical value of the original list, also due to the successful Hollywood film. In fact, it is because of this that every copy of the list is worth a lot of money.

It is then easy to understand how sensitive the issue is now, in light of two separate legal struggles on behalf of a Jewish journalist from Argentina who claims to have the rights to two original copies of the list.

Argentinean author Erika Rosenberg befriended Emilie Schindler a few years prior to her death. Rosenberg assisted Schindler in writing her autobiography and after her death published a few books about the famous couple.

When Emilie died in 2001, Rosenberg was appointed as one of her heirs and received the copyrights to all of the documents written by Oskar Schindler. She now claims that since Oskar Schindler was the one who wrote the list, she is its rightful owner.

In a letter she recently sent to Israeli officials, Rosenberg claims the rights to documents written by Schindler, including the notorious list, which made their way to the Holocaust Museum in Israel during the 1990s in a questionable manner.

The journey these documents underwent, in a suitcase belonging to Oskar, in order to reach Israel could easily be turned into another box-office hit. After World War II, the Schindlers escaped to Argentina and lived on a farm. In 1957, Oskar Schindler decided to abandon his wife, returning to Germany where he lived with his mistress in the town of *Hildesheim*.

Oskar Schindler visited Israel 16 times. In 1962 a tree was planted in Schindler's honor in the Avenue of the Righteous at Yad Vashem, and he was recognized as

Righteous Among the Nations in 1993. Oskar Schindler died in 1974 at the age of 66 and was buried in Israel upon his request.

Emilie was also recognized as Righteous Among the Nations, especially because of her initiative to save 100 Jews who were left to freeze to death in train cars near Schindler's factory towards the end of the war.

In 1997 she wrote in *A Memoir Where Light and Shadow Meet*, with the help of Rosenberg, that neither she nor her husband were heroes; they just did what had to be done.

After Oskar died, Emilie was declared to be his rightful heir by a German court. When Schindler's mistress passed away sometime during the end of the 1990s, her son and neighbors discovered an old suitcase in the attic of the house in *Hildesheim* filled with over 7,000 documents and pictures belonging to Oskar Schindler, including a rare copy of the famous list.

They decided to hand over their findings to the German newspaper *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, which later published a series of articles about Schindler and the lists, quoting from the documents found in the suitcase.

Following these publications, Emilie hired an attorney, with the help of Rosenberg, and demanded all the newly found documents be returned to her. A German courthouse agreed with her and issued a search warrant of the documents and lists at the publishing house.

However, by the time the courthouse representatives arrived at *Stuttgarter Zeitung* headquarters to search for the documents, the suitcase was already on its way to a Lufthansa airplane about to leave for Israel.

The German newspaper had decided the proper place for Schindler's list and the rest of his personal documents was in Yad Vashem.

Ulrich Sahm, a German journalist who was *Stuttgarter Zeitung's* correspondent in Israel at the time, recalled the incident this week. Sahm said he had driven to Ben-Gurion Airport to release the documents from customs: "I was very excited. These are highly valuable historical documents." He said that after a few days he handed the papers to museum chairman Avner Shalev.

However, as far as Emilie Schindler was concerned – the documents had disappeared.

The Schindler documents were on display in Yad Vashem undisturbed until Sahm published his book in March 2010. In the book, the 60-year-old journalist living in Jerusalem for the past 40 years discusses the Schindler list story in great detail.

Erika Rosenberg, who now owns the copyrights to these documents, read the book and decided to react. According to her, she now has proof that the documents found in Schindler's suitcase were robbed from the estate and transferred illegally to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.



Oskar Schindler and the famous list.

Rosenberg wrote a long letter to Israeli officials, including to Deputy Prime Minister Eli Yishai, claiming they should intervene in order to return the lists to their rightful owner.

She wrote that after reading journalist Sahm's story of how the documents were handed over in a secret operation, she had written Yad Vashem personally. This led to a long correspondence with the museum, which said it had received the documents legally.

Rosenberg stated that this is a lie, saying the museum's behavior is not consistent – on the one hand it recognized Emilie as Righteous Among the Nations, but on the other hand it hid Schindler's list from her. Rosenberg went on to say that returning these documents is "a matter of honor and respect, and above all – justice."

The harsh letter exposed the bitterness and claims made by those who were close to Emilie Schindler against the man who made Oskar's name synonymous

with Holocaust remembrance – Steven Spielberg.

Rosenberg criticized Spielberg, saying he "earned millions from the movie" but never gave Emilie a single cent. She added that everyone "profited" on Emilie's behalf, except for her.

Emilie came to Israel in 1992 to participate in the final scene of the famous movie, where Holocaust survivors and their families visit Schindler's grave in Jerusalem. After her passing, Rosenberg filed a suit against Universal Studios, which produced the film, claiming they did not honor an old agreement signed while Oskar Schindler was still alive, promising him 5% of the profits from a movie based on his life.

Deputy Prime Minister Yishai passed along Rosenberg's letter to the museum chairman Avner Shalev.

Yad Vashem spokesperson Iris Rosenberg said: "Yad Vashem, a global and central institution and the official memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, is doing all that it can to acquire any documents or items from the Holocaust. They are preserved here and are accessible to researchers, students and anyone who is interested. We believe that Schindler's list is an historically valuable document belonging in Yad Vashem – where millions can see it. We don't accept Erika Rosenberg's claim. Yad Vashem received the documents given to us by the newspaper *Stuttgarter Zeitung* legally, including original copies of Schindler's list."

Aside from their historical value, the lists are also worth a lot of money. In March 2010 another original copy, though only partial, was auctioned off online for the price of \$3.1 million. The seller, an antique dealer by the name of Gary Zimet, said he inherited the copy from heirs of Itzhak Stern, the Jewish accountant who worked for Schindler during the Holocaust and is credited with typing Schindler's list.

Rosenberg quickly filed a lawsuit in New York in an attempt to stop the online auction or to transfer the money to her account. A restraining order preventing Zimet from selling the document was issued in May 2010, but a judge rejected her claim and allowed the auction to continue. The judge ruled that Schindler's copyrights will not be violated by the auction, unless it will be published.

Either way, it seems this story is far from over, and we might learn the legal fate of one of the most important documents of the 20th century very soon.

HISTORY SAVED FROM THE TRASH

LOUIS COOPER, PNJ

As a Jew living in Nazi-occupied Prague in the late 1930s, Eugene Fuchs reached out to a cousin in Milton for help to bring his family to safety.

"The situation in Prague is very grave," Fuchs wrote to his cousin, Katie Finkelstein, on May 30, 1939.

"Jews are being arrested, taken away, and nobody hears from them anymore," he wrote in the letter, translated from Yiddish. "Many people are committing suicide and many people are dying in the ghetto. Jews are not allowed to be out after 6 p.m. The synagogues are closed or burned to the ground."

Fuchs, who had escaped to England by then, asked Finkelstein for help – both immediate assistance in the form of cash and long-term help by way of helping gain passage to America. Through

Finkelstein's efforts and eventual sponsorship, Fuchs, his wife, Ester, and their two children, Klara – now Claire – and Harry, made their way safely to America. The family Americanized its last name to Fox.

The compelling story came to light recently when Bagdad native and historic preservationist Josh Wilks stumbled upon on a suitcase full of the transatlantic correspondences in a pile of discarded belongings waiting to be taken by garbage collectors outside of the Finkelstein home.

Wilks, 31, received permission from the owners to take the suitcase. He felt as if he were reading the letters when they were originally drafted.

"Knowing the family is Jewish, I immediately figured they were significant when I noticed the European postmarks and the dates," said Wilks, "I was hit with an

overpowering feeling of awe that one person, Katie Finkelstein, a housewife in 1939 Milton, Florida, was trying everything she could to help this family she had never met. She was their only link outside of Europe – to survival – and she knew that."

Wilks organized the letters and set out to contact the families involved. He found Fuchs' daughter, now Claire Perskie, in New Jersey. She was 5 years old when she fled with her mother and brother from Prague in the night. Perskie didn't know any details of how they escaped the Nazis and the role Finkelstein played until Wilks sent her copies of the letters.

"I was absolutely flabbergasted," said Perskie, now 76. "She worked so hard at trying to get us here. It was not an easy feat for her. I didn't realize that until I started reading everything. She really was a wonderful person. My father asked

her for help, and she was right there. I think that says something."

LONDON NOT IDEAL

Prague was a nightmare for the Fuchs family, according to the letters, but London wasn't a promised land.

"I left Prague as soon as Hitler invaded the country, but at first was refused entry into England but managed to be admitted after all. I have no future here. I am not allowed to work, but if one cannot do this, one has nothing to live on," Fuchs wrote in the May 1939 letter.

"I can tell you that I was able to help myself by borrowing a little money from my friend," he wrote to Finkelstein. "It will not last long, but I live very frugally, I am busy learning English, and I am hopeful to leave for the U.S.A. as soon as possible. I hope to find happiness and you will breathe easier since
(Continued on page 12)

HISTORY SAVED FROM THE TRASH

(Continued from page 11)

I hope to be successful in America."

According to the letter collection, Finkelstein received help to rescue the Fuchs from the Department of State, Temple Beth El, a Pensacola attorney, and congressman — later Governor — Millard Caldwell, who was from Milton.

Finkelstein contacted Temple Beth El for assistance — possibly securing a position for Fuchs as a rabbi — but the congregation could offer little help. The temple's leader, Rabbi Martin Friedman, said Fuchs likely did not possess the credentials to be considered a legitimate rabbi. He also worried Fuchs would have trouble gaining employment by a congregation sight unseen. "Please believe me when I say that I am deeply sympathetic to his desperate plight. ... I can only hope with you that his turn for a regular visa will not be delayed too long," Friedman wrote in a June 8, 1939, letter. "This is not good news, I realize, and it is heartbreaking not only for you but also for me, since I come in touch with many similar problems."

Max Bear, of the Lewis Bear Co., however, wrote letters to Finkelstein on behalf of Temple Beth El when she was trying to create a teaching position for Fuchs in America to help get him here. At the time, Bear was president of the temple.

IMMIGRATION FRUSTRATION

Perskie has only patchy memories of her time in Prague. Her mother, she said, sheltered the children from much of the threatening calamity.

"I remember looking out of the apartment window and seeing troops marching down the street. ... We left with no baggage. All my mother had was a knapsack on her back. It happened suddenly," she said. "I remember the trip we took in the middle of the night. I remember the train, and I remember I was terrified of the boat. We were in a stateroom, and the water was above the porthole."

MAKER OF SHOAH STRESSES ITS LASTING VALUE

(Continued from page 8)

Nazis,' or if you don't like the dogcatcher, he's 'the Gestapo.' That undermines the significance of the tragedy, which is why the re-release of *Shoah* offers a very important and significant opportunity to refocus."

Grabbing and keeping the attention of a generation raised on YouTube snippets may be a challenge. But Jonathan Sehring, president of IFC Entertainment, which is distributing the film, points to his company's successful promotion of other long-form movies considered "difficult," including the recent *Carlos*, about the terrorist called Carlos the Jackal, and *Che*, about Che Guevara (which both clocked in years after the war. at more than four hours).

Since the initial release of *Shoah*, Mr. Lanzmann has also made three satellite films, none longer than about an hour and a half. The most recent of these is *The Karski Report*, issued this year, in which he goes back to the testimony of Jan Karski, the Polish underground courier

The mother and children took the train to Holland and then the ship to England. Reunited in London, the family sought passage to America. In London, Perskie was sent to foster care, while her parents and brother were sent to a Czech refugee camp. With Finkelstein's help, the Fuchs almost made it to America in 1941 by airplane, but Nazi air raids canceled all civilian flights. Perskie said she didn't learn about Finkelstein's help until about 1942 during one of her family's failed attempts to leave England.

"I didn't know anything until we had to go to the American embassy. That's when my father told me that Katie had sent papers and that we were going to be going to America," she said. "Even though Katie had papers for us, (President Franklin) Roosevelt closed the gate. We remained in England (until 1948). I believe she just continued, from her first attempt, trying to get us here."

Not everyone in the Fuchs family survived. "The circumstances here are very bad and there is no possibility to stay here longer," wrote Fany Fuchs, Eugene Fuchs' mother, in a March 7, 1939, letter to Finkelstein. "Beforehand, it is necessary that my son gets the immigration permit and when being in the U.S.A. he could bring us all there."

Fany Fuchs, however, never made it to America. She died at the *Treblinka* concentration camp, one of several of Fuchs' extended family who perished in the Holocaust.

FAMILIES REUNITED

Wilks discovered the suitcase of letters outside the home of Margot Finkelstein, Katie Finkelstein's daughter. Margot died in 2009. The suitcase contained about 30 letters along with envelopes, photos and even a poster advertising a service in London where Fuchs was to be the cantor. Most of the letters were hand-written in English by an intermediary — a Mrs. Cohen — Fuchs

asked to translate for him in London. Some letters were written in Yiddish.

With permission of the family, Wilks took the letters to be examined and researched. He set out to find the people mentioned in



Josh Wilks discovered a suitcase full of letters describing the events in Prague just before the Nazi occupation in 1939. The suitcase was about to be thrown in the trash when Wilks found it.

the letters and their descendents. He pored through public records. He searched ship manifests. He called volumes of Fuchs and Foxes all over the country.

Katie Finkelstein lived in Milton until her death in 1990. Eugene Fuchs died in 1964 at the age of 61 in New Jersey. Ester Fuchs died in 1999 at the age of 90 in New Jersey.

In addition to Perskie, Wilks found Harry Fuchs, now 73, in Texas. He found one of Finkelstein's daughters living near Fort Lauderdale. Dorothy Finkelstein Green wasn't living in Milton when the letters were written or when the Fuchs eventually came to Milton. They lived there briefly before settling in New Jersey.

"When they came over, I was around 19 or 20, and I was already away from there,"

said Green, now 87. "I know they came over. I know they were from Czechoslovakia. I know they went to England, and then they came to America. (My mother) was their sponsor. She really was concerned, I'm sure. And she did save them." Although the Fuchs and the Finkelsteins had lost contact for decades, Perskie and Green have communicated several times since Wilks unearthed the letters.

LETTERS TO BE PRESERVED

Wilks wants to find a way to preserve the letters in a way that will allow them to be used to further history.

"I'm working on more research and intend on engaging the local Jewish community in using these letters to showcase how the Holocaust affected a local family," he said. He is working with the family, the University of West Florida, the Library of Congress, local historians, and others to decide how to best use the letters.

Temple Beth El's current leader, Rabbi Leonard Zukrow, praised the letters for their historic value.

"It is a demonstration that Jews here did do something rather than being unable to do something in this situation," Zukrow said. "It also demonstrates an awareness of what was happening in Germany and the severity of the situation for the Jewish community. These letters also demonstrate the connection Jews have one to another to aid each other in times of challenge.

"Certainly, such a collection is invaluable (in) historical value as a primary source."

Wilks said his discovery has "re-inspired my faith in the human spirit."

"I've always heard about those significant events in life, or those books that change your way of thinking. These letters and this story certainly are that event for me," he said. "When I find myself talking and thinking about this, I remember the Jewish saying 'and whoever saves a life, it is considered as if he saved an entire world.' In her own way, Katie saved the world — at least for one family."

IN THE NAME OF THE MOTHER: ASHES GO TO TREBLINKA

(Continued from page 9)

her belongings, he began to understand. Inside her black leather wallet he found a single black-and-white photo of her father as a young man.

"That explains everything," Werber said, tears welling in his eyes. "She was probably ridden with guilt, feeling that she should have died there with her family. A child who loses her parents at age nine is traumatized for life. I suppose she felt this intense need to join them."

With a heavy heart, he executed her will. First he negotiated the release of her body and had it cremated by a private company that keeps its crematorium's location secret because the act is so taboo in Israel — it violates Jewish law and also conjures up images of the Holocaust ovens.

Then, along with his sister and his son, he departed to Poland, packing the ashes in his suitcase. It was a tricky operation. He wasn't sure about the legality of traveling with human remains and was afraid he would be turned back if he made his intentions clear upon arrival in Poland — so he told no one from start to finish.

During the five-day trip — his first time back in Poland since he departed as an infant — he returned to his home town of *Bielsko-Biala*. But the highlight was the pri-

vate ceremony at *Treblinka*, where he retraced the path of the incoming prisoners.

Before shutting down the death camp, the Nazis attempted to destroy all evidence of their atrocities. The structures were destroyed and the ground was plowed and planted over.

Today, all that remains are a series of concrete slabs representing the train tracks, and mounds of rocks and gravel with a series of memorials and stone tablets representing lost communities.

Access to the site is open, so Werber didn't draw attention.

On the September day he scattered the ashes, skies were clear and sunny.

"It was quiet and beautiful and that bothered me," he said. "I expected it to be dark and dreary and to project death, but it didn't."

Regardless, he said he felt "sadness, but also relief" to have fulfilled his mother's last wishes.

A German television crew recorded his actions, and he doesn't intend to ever return to Poland, a place he calls "one big cemetery for Jews."

In lieu of a real grave, Werber called the footage his mother's true "tombstone."

"I'm at peace with myself. It's an unusual, creative tombstone and it suits her," he said. "She was definitely a special person."



A scene from *Shoah* features residents of the Polish town of Oswiecim 40 years after the war.

eventually be included in a DVD package with *Shoah*.

"Most of those I interviewed are now deceased," he said. "But *Shoah* the film is not dead. I don't know what you think, but for me, every time I sit to watch my film, I say I will stay two minutes, but I always stay longer. The film has no wrinkles."

NAZIS WERE GIVEN "SAFE HAVEN" IN U.S., REPORT SAYS

(Continued from page 8)

about Nazis in this country, the report found.

In 1980, prosecutors filed a motion that "misstated the facts" in asserting that checks of C.I.A. and F.B.I. records revealed no information on the Nazi past of Tscherm Soobzokov, a former Waffen SS soldier. In fact, the report said, the Justice Department "knew that Soobzokov had advised the C.I.A. of his SS connection after he arrived in the United States."

(After the case was dismissed, radical Jewish groups urged violence against Mr. Soobzokov, and he was killed in 1985 by a bomb at his home in Paterson, N.J.)

The secrecy surrounding the Justice Department's handling of the report could pose a political dilemma for President Obama because of his pledge to run the most transparent administration in history. Mr. Obama chose the Justice Department to coordinate the opening of government records.

The Nazi-hunting report was the brainchild of Mark Richard, a senior Justice Department lawyer. In 1999, he persuaded Attorney General Janet Reno to begin a detailed look at what he saw as a critical piece of history, and he assigned a career prosecutor, Judith Feigin, to the job. After Mr. Richard edited the final version in 2006, he urged senior officials to make it public but was rebuffed, colleagues said.

When Mr. Richard became ill with cancer, he told a gathering of friends and family that the report's publication was one of three things he hoped to see before he died, the colleagues said. He died in June 2009, and Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. spoke at his funeral.

"I spoke to him the week before he died, and he was still trying to get it released," Ms. Feigin said. "It broke his heart."

After Mr. Richard's death, David Sobel, a Washington lawyer, and the National Security Archive sued for the report's release under the Freedom of Information Act.

The Justice Department initially fought the lawsuit, but finally gave Mr. Sobel a partial copy — with more than 1,000 passages and references deleted based on exemptions for privacy and internal deliberations.

Laura Sweeney, a Justice Department spokeswoman, said the department is committed to transparency, and that redactions are made by experienced lawyers.

The full report disclosed that the Justice Department found "a smoking gun" in 1997 establishing with "definitive proof" that Switzerland had bought gold from the Nazis that had been taken from Jewish victims of the Holocaust. But these references are deleted, as are disputes between the Justice and State Departments over Switzerland's culpability in the months leading up to a major report on the issue.

Another section describes as "a hideous failure" a series of meetings in 2000 that United States officials held with Latvian officials to pressure them to pursue suspected Nazis. That passage is also deleted.

So too are references to macabre but little-known bits of history, including how a director of the O.S.I. kept a piece of scalp that was thought to belong to Dr. Mengele in his desk in hopes that it would help establish whether he was dead.

The chapter on Dr. Mengele, one of the most notorious Nazis to escape prosecution, details the O.S.I.'s elaborate efforts in the mid-1980s to determine whether he had fled to the United States and might still be alive.

It describes how investigators used letters and diaries apparently written by Dr. Mengele in the 1970s, along with German dental records and Munich phone books, to follow his trail.

After the development of DNA tests, the piece of scalp, which had been turned over by the Brazilian authorities, proved to be a critical piece of evidence in establishing that Dr. Mengele had fled to Brazil and had died there in about 1979 without ever entering the United States, the report said. The edited report deletes references to Dr. Mengele's scalp on privacy grounds.

Even documents that have long been available to the public are omitted, including court decisions, Congressional testimony and front-page newspaper articles from the 1970s.

A chapter on the O.S.I.'s most publicized failure — the case against John Demjanjuk, a retired American autoworker who was mistakenly identified as Treblinka's Ivan the Terrible — deletes dozens of details, including part of a 1993 ruling by the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit that raised ethics accusations against Justice Department officials.

That section also omits a passage disclosing that Latvian émigrés sympathetic to Mr. Demjanjuk secretly arranged for the O.S.I.'s trash to be delivered to them each day from 1985 to 1987. The émigrés rifled through the garbage to find classified documents that could help Mr. Demjanjuk, who is currently standing trial in Munich on separate war crimes charges.

Ms. Feigin said she was baffled by the Justice Department's attempt to keep a central part of its history secret for so long. "It's an amazing story," she said, "that needs to be told."

IN THE SHADOW OF THE RED BANNER

(Continued from page 4)

verve with which its author knowingly describes the Jewish fighting. He does not write in numbers — although his conclusions rely heavily on statistics, Arad admits that in too many cases such data are controversial or simply unavailable — but describes in details hundreds of examples of Jewish heroism.

In the Shadow of the Red Banner corresponds to no small extent with previous books by Yitzhak Arad, in particular with his *History of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (two volumes in Hebrew and one volume in English). In my opinion, part of this background information could be omitted from the present volume, without jeopardizing its integrity.

I feel a certain amount of discomfort because in such a big (in all senses) book Yitzhak Arad did not tell us explicitly how he gauges the Jewish contribution to the Soviet military effort; below the average, at the average, or over the average. Nor did he provide a clue to the question that haunted me: why did the Jews fight the way they did? Was it only fighting against the Nazis, because understandably, they had no choice? If so, what about the first period of the war, when the news of German mistreatment of Jews did not reach Jewish soldiers and civilians?

Despite my concerns and questions, *In the Shadow of the Red Banner* offers a rich and comprehensive history of Jewish contribution to the Soviet victory. The author should be particularly praised for a wide range of sources in several languages and an updated bibliography. In short, this is a wonderful and well-written study of a critically important case that continues to have impact both for the Jewish audience and beyond its borders.

THE SHOAH

(Continued from page 4)

the complex Shoah theme presupposes a variety of perspectives and responses. Surprises, even disturbing ones — after all the Shoah is so very disturbing — might be in store depending upon one's background, experience, and inclination, as in the following explosive verse by professor Bronislava Volkova from Indiana University: "Who but God could, however, / stand to watch such misery and cruelty being inflicted even on the guilty / much less so on the innocent!" Vancouver's poet Christy Hill reveals her ambivalence of inner conflict which touches core issues: "I do not want to remember. I do not want to forget."

The late Yehuda Amichai, Israel's poet laureate and a native of Germany, captures the Jewish life-affirming spirit of "Amen" in the midst of untold historical brokenness of stones and lives culminating in the Shoah. He bids us to turn "The Jewish time bomb of pain and rage" into "an amen and love stone."

Norman Gordon, who taught physics, is charging that already in 1942 German civilians, the U.S. State Department, and American Jews knew of European Jewry's fate, yet they all failed to intervene. He accusingly laments, "What will you tell the Mashiach / on the night of transcendence

/ when all the living and dead climbing the ropes and ladders / between heaven and earth are judged?"

Arizona writer Linda Pressman's short story with its arousing title, "Holocaust Vacation," takes us on a family trip with her parents-survivors from Illinois to Toronto to visit a relative, a survivor too. She ponders with dark humor concerning her parents' vacation target, "where can they go to find the most tragedy?"

Though Michal Mahgerefteh's Sephardic family was not directly touched by the



Holocaust, she gives voice along with others, including myself, whose lives resonate with the lingering impact of an epic event, in a uniquely educational volume connecting us across a threatening abyss to the victims' own voices of song and supplication, meaning and doubt, silenced by life-negating forces. The literary quest to engage a critical and complex past will surely endure, even as we'll do well to harken to the implicit present warning in the offered quote sealing this searing anthology, by Israel's

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu:

"No one yet knows what awaits the Jews in the twenty-first century, but we must make every effort to ensure that it is better than what befell them in the twentieth, the century of the Holocaust."

Rabbi Dr. Israel Zoberman is the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, Virginia.



 								
<p>AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM & ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SOCIAL STUDIES OF THE UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (ATSS/UFT)</p>								
<p>Invite all Superintendents, Principals and Educators of History, Judaic Studies, English, Humanities and Global Studies (history, social studies) to the</p> <p>13th Annual Professional Development Conference</p> <p><i>Survival and Resistance</i> a look at the experiences of survivors and resistance fighters</p>								
<table border="0"> <tr> <td>DATE:</td> <td>Sunday, February 27, 2011</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TIME:</td> <td>8:30 AM - 3:00 PM 8:30 AM Breakfast 9:00 AM Program Commences</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PLACE:</td> <td>Pratt Mansion / Marymount School 1027 Fifth Avenue (between 83rd and 84th Streets) New York, NY 10028</td> </tr> <tr> <td>REGISTRATION:</td> <td>Free of Charge</td> </tr> </table>	DATE:	Sunday, February 27, 2011	TIME:	8:30 AM - 3:00 PM 8:30 AM Breakfast 9:00 AM Program Commences	PLACE:	Pratt Mansion / Marymount School 1027 Fifth Avenue (between 83 rd and 84 th Streets) New York, NY 10028	REGISTRATION:	Free of Charge
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REGISTRATION:	Free of Charge							
<p>All registered participants will receive COMPLIMENTARY educational materials as well as items available for purchase at the end of the conference.</p> <p>Program ends at approx. 4pm ** Kosher breakfast and lunch will be served</p>								
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THE HOLOCAUST IN LITHUANIA: ONE MAN'S CRUSADE TO BRING JUSTICE

(Continued from page 5)

that the suspects would die or become old and sick enough to be declared unfit to stand trial or serve time.

"Basically the country failed because not a single [war] criminal was brought to justice. It's as simple as that," says Donskis.

Contrast Lithuania's record with that of Croatia, which, as a newly minted nation, brought Dinko Sakic to trial in 1998 for crimes committed during World War II while commander of the *Jasenovac* concentration camp.

After Zuroff tracked him down, Sakic was extradited from Argentina and convicted by a Croatian court for taking part in the murder and torture of thousands of Jews, Serbs, Gypsies, and anti-Fascist Croats. The court sentenced him to 20 years in prison, the harshest penalty under Croatian law at the time.

"The Sakic case was really a watershed event in the history of Croatia and something that really changed the tenor of the public discussion about the Holocaust and was a wake-up call for Croatian society," says Zuroff.

For Zuroff, the Sakic case is a success not because it put an old war criminal in jail — though that was necessary — but because it helped ensure an honest reckoning of Croatia's past.

Germany has also gone to great lengths to face its ugly past.

"They, more than any country," Zuroff says, "have tried to make atonement for the Holocaust and have paid billions of dollars in reparations — although it's not only the issue of money but it's also the issue of education against extremism, xenophobia, the banning of Nazi symbols. ... You can't say Germany is not making an honest effort to face its past."

But you can say it, says Zuroff, about Lithuania.

THE MUSEUM OF GENOCIDE VICTIMS

The state-funded Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius, Lithuania, is an impressive structure. In a country of relatively humble means, it stands out for its size. Its stated objective is to "collect, keep and present historic documents about forms of physical and spiritual genocide against the Lithuanian people."

But the story of the more than 200,000 Jews killed in Lithuania by the Nazis and their local collaborators is not part of the museum.

Instead, the museum memorializes Lithuanian victims of Soviet occupation during World War II.

As one Lithuanian put it, "We have to learn our own history, before we learn their [the Jews] history," implying the murdered Jews were not Lithuanians — but they were.

Jews have been a constant and integral part of Lithuania for hundreds of years. Before the war, the city of Vilnius was known as the "Jerusalem of Lithuania." Jews made up more than a third of the city and contributed to its intellectual and creative elite and to its complex, vibrant social fabric.

The question of excluding Jews then becomes "a question of whether you're embracing your own citizens or not," says Snyder.

Donskis agrees. "Instead of accepting the Holocaust as the tragedy of Lithuania, many people are still inclined to regard the Holocaust to have been something external." Instead, the nation focuses on the the horror of the Soviet occupations of Lithuania.

The crimes of the Soviets in Eastern Europe and in Lithuania in particular are not as well known in the West as they should be, says Snyder.

In the first occupation, from the summer of 1940 to the summer of 1941, the Soviets deported, jailed, and murdered anyone deemed a threat — ethnic Lithuanians as well as Poles and Jews.

Soviet brutality continued when the Red Army re-conquered Lithuania in 1944, and the almost 50 years of Soviet rule that followed were brutal by any standard.



Efraim Zuroff's namesake, his great-uncle, was murdered after being kidnapped in Lithuania during the Holocaust.

But did Soviet crimes amount to genocide, as the name of the museum suggests?

Donskis calls the idea "profoundly embarrassing."

"Historical and political evidence doesn't support the theory that the Soviet Union exterminated Lithuanians on national or ethnic grounds."

Lithuanians who chose the Soviet regime "were welcome in the Red Army. They were welcome among Soviet bureaucrats. They had splendid careers. And we know that the Lithuanian Communist Party was led by [non-Jewish] Lithuanians. That's why the concept of genocide is simply not applicable here."

Ambassador Bruzga is more circumspect. "We do not equate one pain to another pain, one loss to another loss. But we would like to take a broader, a holistic view on what happened at that time in Lithuania — and how it could happen that those crimes were committed and people suf-

fered ... no matter who they were — what nationality, what religion."

Asked whether Jewish Lithuanians, who so obviously suffered a genocide, should be included in Lithuania's Museum of Genocide Victims, Bruzga says, "It should be perhaps looked into ... I don't see why not," but then adds, "It could be one museum, it could be two or three museums." The Holocaust in Lithuania, says Bruzga, has to be considered in the context of "other developments and crimes that surround it."

Still, Bruzga says huge questions about the Holocaust in Lithuania remain:

"Why were there a number of Lithuanians who took part, some of them willingly, in the murder of Jews who were citizens of their own country — the same people living in the same land and actually in the same neighborhood? ... What unleashed that kind of monstrosity?"

"Before we take many skeletons out of the closet, we will not get a catharsis. And perhaps we will not be at peace with our past and ourselves," says Bruzga.

Donskis is more specific:

"It will be impossible for Lithuania to come to terms with its history ... until the country's elite admits that the provisional government of Lithuania in 1941 collaborated with the Nazis and acted against Lithuanian citizens. Unfortunately, the provisional government ... is praised up to the skies in Lithuania.

"It is a disgrace."

For Zuroff, Lithuania missed its best opportunity for catharsis by failing to punish even one of its own citizens for Holocaust crimes.

"The Lithuanians squandered the best chance they had to get that burden of guilt off of them. And now it's going to take them 100 years to get rid of it. The only way they will succeed is through education, documentation, research — and a lot of pain."

THE PAST IS PRESENT

(Continued from page 6)

more than mere entertainment. "In the pages of this story," she says, "he's able to play out this scenario where you can get justice for injustices and sometimes even violent vengeance by the story's hero on people who have hurt him or killed people close to him."

"You don't have to be an analyst" to interpret Kraus's story, Grodin says, when you consider that he was a child confined by hostile forces, writing about faraway lands.

"It certainly gave us something creative to do," Kraus says. "Maybe that was the most important thing at that time. We were not prepared that the war would take many more years. We were not thinking about death, because at that time I don't think we were that aware what awaited us in the so-called East, because nobody talked about Auschwitz."

On December 15, 1943, after a year in *Theresienstadt*, Kraus and his parents were sent by the Nazis to the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland. Kraus left behind more stories that he'd written for *Kamarad*, and they appeared in future editions, but magazine production stopped after the 22d issue, on September 22, 1944. The last article concludes with the line "to be continued." A short time later, Polak was also transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Polak would die in the Holocaust, as would most of the boys who contributed to *Kamarad*.

After six months at Auschwitz, Kraus's father was sent to the gas chambers and his mother was transferred to two other

camp, dying at one of them. Kraus, then almost 14, was spared from the death chambers when Dr. Josef Mengele selected him to go to a neighboring men's camp, where he was assigned to run errands and do other jobs. Kraus eventually was sent to other camps and forced to participate in death marches. When the war ended, Kraus, nearly 15, returned to his hometown of *Nachod* and attempted to rebuild his life. "After surviving the war," he



Michael Kraus is joined in his home by Boston University professor Dr. Michael Grodin, who is studying *Kamarad*.

says, "many of us were traumatized by the fact that we lost our parents." During the war, Kraus had kept a diary, but it was confiscated in Auschwitz. Once back in *Nachod*, he re-created the journal, and four years ago he donated it to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Kraus says he thinks of himself "as a scribe, or as somebody who perhaps thought that something should be left to posterity."

In 1948, Kraus emigrated to Canada, the land of his and Polak's childhood dreams.

By 1951, he ended up in New York City, where he studied architecture at Columbia University. He married and raised a family in Brookline, where he lives with his 74-year-old wife, Ilana.

All 22 editions of *Kamarad* ended up at *Beit Theresienstadt*, a nonprofit organization formed on an Israeli kibbutz by those who survived *Theresienstadt*. It's a mystery who saved the magazines.

For at least 15 years, Israeli researchers have recognized *Kamarad* as something worth preserving and studying. An Israeli woman, Ruth Bondy, wrote a 1997 book about the magazine, and in 2005 *Kamarad* was featured in a film broadcast on Israeli TV. In 2003, a group of Israeli schoolchildren studied the magazine and created a 23d issue. In response, the eighth-grade class at the Hasten Hebrew Academy in Indianapolis in 2004 created its own issue of *Kamarad*. "They were into it," says Marcy Ekhaus, an academy administrator whose son, then a student, participated in the magazine project. "It was certainly impressive to them that [the original *Kamarad* boys] were children their own age."

But aside from the Indianapolis project, the existence of *Kamarad* has not received much attention in the United States. And Grodin knows of no one else who has studied the magazine as an example of childhood resiliency.

While in Israel this summer, Susie Rodenstein, whose late father was a Holocaust survivor and was confined in *Theresienstadt*, visited *Beit Theresienstadt* and asked for copies of all of Kraus's *Ka-*

marad contributions. "The journals and the stories and the articles give you insight to things we never could have gotten insight to, especially because many of the people who would have been his age during this time period have either repressed, suppressed, or just don't have complete memories because they were young," Rodenstein says. "But now he's able to read the materials that he and his friends wrote, and it has in some cases been able to bring back some memories. . . . I think he's really enjoying discovering what he was about at that age and what the things were that were of import to him."

Studying Kraus's *Kamarad* contributions, Grodin says, "reinforces the fact that people cope in their own way, that it's a big mistake to tell people how to cope, that group experience is very helpful, that trying to survive as an individual is hard, that children have an incredible capacity to try to put together something that is safe for them.

"The boys used the magazine to fight their boredom and calm their anxiety," Grodin adds. "Children played in order to maintain a sense of normalcy, this is my sense, as well as to be creative and exchange ideas of an imaginary escape in order to dull their suffering."

Grodin recognizes how valuable it is to his research that a contributor of *Kamarad* is still alive and living so close to him. Rodenstein, too, is eager to continue the meetings with Kraus: "We walk out every time inspired and wanting to know and understand more."

HOW ONE POLISH WOMAN UNCOVERED HER TOWN'S SHOCKING ROLE IN THE HOLOCAUST

(Continued from page 7)

1940 – by which time Poland's anti-Semitism had increased with fury in the years before the Nazi invasion – reveals two fur-coated Polish policemen at the entrance to the *Sokolow* ghetto. A Jewish resident peers over a brick wall marking the boundary of the ghetto. The caption on Markusz's photograph – the same scene but without the wall – reads simply: "This place is easily recognizable today."

I ask her what kind of reaction there has been. "Mostly positive," Markusz replies. "Some people have old photographs of *Sokolow*, and they want to show them to me. Others don't like it. But my success is that I have made people think about Jews again and the history of their town." What about the mass grave? "I discovered it after I took these pictures," she says. "Let's go – I'll show you."

We enter *Rynek Szewski*, or Shoemakers Market. This is nice, I say. "It's not nice – look," says Markusz, running her hand along the jagged edge of a 3-foot-high stone terrace in front of a row of shops. "Look at the stones. The Germans made this terrace from gravestones from the Jewish cemetery. I want to preserve the gravestones, but the town authorities are not interested."

I recognize the markings of Hebrew writing in the stone. Not long ago, Markusz tells me, gravestones like these were used to pave the roads of *Sokolow*. "Look," she says, pointing at the terrace. "Someone has vandalized it and gravestones were stolen from it. I went to the police when I saw this last week, but they don't care either."

Next we enter an area that was the center of the ghetto. The Nazis established *Sokolow's* ghetto in 1939 in two streets around the main synagogue, cramming about 5,000 people into it. In the summer of 1941, the ghetto was bricked off and closed. Later, 2,000 refugees from the *Lodz* and *Kalisz* regions were also forced into it. Starvation and death were rife.

A year later, the Germans began deporting Jews to an unknown destination. Between September 22 and 25, 1943, inhabitants of the ghetto were forced into the town square.

Many attempted escape but were shot or handed over to the Nazis by collaborating Poles, according to testimonies logged at the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum in Jerusalem.

Over those four days, 5,800 Jews were transported in sealed cattle wagons to *Treblinka*, where they were murdered upon arrival.

"It wasn't only Germans who participated in the ghetto liquidation, but also Latvians and Ukrainians," says Markusz. "One old man told me the soldiers were always drunk and killed children in a special way – not with a bullet to the head, but they took them by the feet and shattered their heads on walls."

"The old man said the girls were very beautiful, and that he was still sad they were gone. The Germans used these people to clean the ghetto after liquidation, and also for labor in the surrounding villages and farms. One night, they were made to dig a pit – right here. They were no longer useful to the Germans. They had to strip naked. They were then shot into the pit and covered with earth, probably by Poles from *Sokolow*, under German orders."

Nonetheless, on January 6, 1944, Soviet troops pushed across the Polish border.

The Eastern Front was collapsing. The Germans began to destroy the evidence of their terror and in late spring withdrew from *Sokolow*. "The old man told me the Germans dug up the remains of the 200 Jews in the pit," says Markusz. "He said they rolled out logs and had a fire for two weeks, turning bones and decomposed flesh into ash. That was the end of Jews in *Sokolow*. The last tomb, the last grave."

I look around this town in the middle of nowhere and imagine the flames and the odor of death. The old man's story doesn't quite make sense, I say. The Germans wouldn't have dug up the remains themselves. Markusz asks me to explain, and I suggest *Sokolowers* dug up the grave under German orders. The Germans never did the dirty work.

"Maybe it's true," says Markusz. "People don't want to know bad things about Poles. They want to hear that Poles were brave." Some were, I say.

"I think Poles feel guilty they didn't save more Jews, so they make up history," she continues. "The other truth people don't want to admit is that when survivors returned to *Sokolow* after the war, they were not welcome." And what about the Poles who hid Jews? "Three *Sokolowers* received medals for saving Jews. There should have been more. We lost so many people here."

"The pictures I'm taking, I hope they build bridges between Poles and Jews. I'm trying to save the Jews by saving their history."

The following day I am in Warsaw again, back in Poland. A. Over lunch in the city's *Stary Miasto*, I ask Malgosia Kowalska why she thinks anti-Semitism remains rife in Poland.

"Imagine it's 1939 and the Germans have not yet arrived," she says. "Let's say it's *Sokolow*. All your life you have lived in this town. For whatever reason, you may not like the Jews, but you live with them. All your life you bought bread from the Jewish baker. Sometimes he even gives you credit when times are hard."

"You see the Jewish milkman and cast your eye on his beautiful daughter. Another day, a Jewish tailor fixes your clothes, and you smile at his little son and pat him on the head as you leave his shop."

"Then, the Nazis come. They do terrible things to the baker. Perhaps, right before your eyes, they murder the milkman's beautiful daughter. Perhaps the little son of the tailor is shot in the head in front of you. And what do you do? Nothing. Maybe you can't do anything – maybe you can and don't. Maybe you're afraid. Maybe it's impossible to help. Either way, you do nothing, and you feel terrible about it."

"What else do you feel? You feel guilty. So how do you explain this? You hate them, even when they're gone. You tell yourself they deserved to be murdered, that they are the guilty ones – even the little son of the tailor – to preserve your own sanity."

So how can Poland move on from this? "It faces the truth and its fears," says Kowalska.

"That's why Katarzyna Markusz's work is so important. If you ask me, the whole country needs therapy."

Even Markusz? "Why else would she be doing these things in her town and making all these wonderful photographs? She feels guilt, like the rest of Poland."

SCHOLARS RECONSIDERING ITALY'S TREATMENT OF JEWS IN THE NAZI ERA

BY PAUL VITELLO, THE NEW YORK TIMES

Italians took everything from Ursula Korn Selig's family during World War II, including a hotel the family owned on the Riviera and the money they carried after fleeing Germany's persecution of Jews in 1938.

Italians also saved her family from almost certain death in Nazi concentration camps, Mrs. Selig said, hiding them in a succession of secret shelters in Italy between 1938 and 1944, often at the risk of the Italians' own lives.

The two faces Italy displayed toward Jewish citizens and refugees just before and during World War II have become the focus of recent historical research that both undermines that country's wartime image as a nation of benign captors, and rekindles memories of heroic Italian individuals.

Mrs. Selig, 85, who has lived in Manhattan since 1950, offered her double-edged testimony after a panel discussion on the new scholarship at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, in Battery Park City — days before Jews commemorate *Kristallnacht*.

The new findings contradict the conventional belief that Italians began to enforce anti-Semitic laws only after German troops occupied the country in 1943, and then reluctantly. In a

spate of studies, many of them based on a little-publicized Italian government report commissioned in 1999, researchers have uncovered a vast wartime record detailing a systematic disenfranchisement of Italy's Jews, beginning in the summer of 1938, shortly before the *Kristallnacht* attacks in November.

That year, Mussolini's Fascist government forbade Jewish children to attend public or private schools, ordered the dismissal of Jews from professorships in all universities, and banned Jews from the civil service and military as well as the banking and insurance industries.

Ilaria Pavan, a scholar at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, said a series of increasingly more onerous laws in 1939 and 1940 revoked peddlers' permits and shopkeepers' licenses, and required Jewish owners of businesses — as well as stock or bond holders — to sell those assets to "Aryans." Bank accounts were ordered turned over to government authorities, ostensibly to prevent the transfer of money out of the country.

There is little record of the sums involved in the confiscations and forced sales of Jewish-held property between 1938 and 1943, said Ms. Pavan, who was a member of the official government commission charged with investigating the anti-Semitic plundering. But between 1943 and 1945, when the Italian government was under the direct supervision of German overseers, the looting of property of Jewish Italian citizens and Jewish refugees who had fled to Italy in hopes of sanctuary, she said, totaled almost \$1 billion in today's values.

After the war, encouraged in part by Italy's American occupiers, Italians embraced a spirit of national reconciliation that "allowed the construction of a sanitized collective memory," said Alessandro Cassin, the publishing director of the Centro Primo Levi, a research institute in Manhattan that promotes the study of Italian

Jewish history, and that organized the panel discussion.

The whitewash was possible, in part, because by comparison with the horrors inflicted by Nazi Germany, the Italian government was "not as lethal," said Guri Schwarz, an adjunct professor at the University of Pisa. It did not sanction physical abuse of Jewish citizens, did not execute anyone in the internment camps established for Jews in southern Italy, and did not begin to send Jews to Nazi concentration camps until the German occupation in 1943, he said.

Of the 45,000 Jews counted in Mussolini's census of 1938, about 8,000 died in Nazi camps. About 7,000 managed to flee. About 30,000 lived in hiding before



A photo of Harry Arlin, with his parents, Emily and Leo Armstein, in the *Ferramonti di Tarsia* concentration camp.

being liberated by Allied troops, Mr. Schwarz said.

One of those hiding was Mrs. Selig, who was among about 100 people in the audience for the discussion.

"It is a very complex situation," she said, when asked afterward about her feelings toward wartime Italy and Italians. Thirteen years old when her family fled Berlin and settled in northern Italy in 1938, she said her experience in Italy over the next eight years ran the spectrum from the despair of destitution to the exhilaration of freedom.

"They took everything from us," she said. "My father and mother were quite wealthy when they arrived in Italy. But when they came to the United States after the war, he had to work as a night watchman, and she had to work in the garment district."

On the other hand, as she said during a question-and-answer period after the presentation, "I would not be here if not for Italians."

"An Italian woman hid me, an Italian priest put me in a convent where I wore a nun's habit, and an Italian boy risked his life to bring us food," she said.

Harry Arlin, 83, an audience member who said his family was interned in an Italian camp for several years, also stood to describe his experiences, saying, "If the Italians hadn't taken us to their camp, we would have been sent to the Germans' camp, and we would have been killed."

Michele Sarfatti, the author of several books on Italian Fascist anti-Semitism, said a higher portion of Italy's Jews survived the war than their counterparts in most other European countries.

But Italian culpability for the persecution of Jews remains relatively unknown, and largely unacknowledged by Italians, Professor Pavan said. "People were made destitute, people were turned into ghostly nonentities in their own country," she said. "This is also true."




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