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ELI ZBOROWSKI REMEMBERED (1925–2012)

ROCHEL AND GEORGE BERMAN

Eli Zborowski was a man of the moment. Throughout his life, when he found a need he could uniquely fulfill, he stepped in without hesitation. Whether leading war orphans to safety, assuring the future of Holocaust education, or making a commercial product available, Eli rose to the challenge. In the process, he enriched the lives of a great many people on four continents. He was a cosmopolitan, at home in Poland, Germany, Israel, and Latin America. He was at ease with politicians and popes, workers and entrepreneurs. In short, Eli was a man for all seasons.

Eli's open, liberal, and humanistic character stemmed from the environment in which he was nurtured. He was the first born child of Zisel and Moshe Zborowski who lived in Żarki, Poland, not far from the German border. Moshe Zborowski was a very successful leather merchant and Zisel, a homemaker. Their comfortable one-story brick home was constantly open to those in need. Yeshiva students came daily to join the family for the noontime meat meal, and there was rarely a Shabbat or a *Yomtov* that did not include less fortunate members of the community at the family table.

As a bright, handsome child who was the favorite among the extended family, he grew up feeling confident and self-assured. His mother taught him to speak a perfect Polish and the importance of *gemilat chesed* — acts of loving kindness. His father provided him with business knowledge, negotiating skills and moral strength.

In the early fall of 1939, following a leisurely fun-filled summer, the atmosphere in Żarki was transformed into full-fledged war. Life was suddenly filled with danger, uncertainty, and restrictions. Eli, only a teenager, became a member of the United Jewish Fighters Organization. His blond hair and blue eyes, a confiscated Polish army jacket, and a false Polish passport allowed him to pass easily as a non-Jew. He distributed the underground newspaper about unfolding events to the small Jewish communities in southwest Poland. As he was familiar with the countryside and neighboring towns, he was



later given the responsibility of seeking arms and ammunition for the resistance. Serving as a courier put him in mortal danger. Eli's family begged him to stop. He promised that he would, but he never kept his promise. During the final years of the war, Zisel, Eli, and his two siblings, Marvin and Tzila, were hidden from the Nazis by two Christian families. At this time, Moshe Zborowski was assigned by the Nazis to a work detail. In an attempt to escape, he was shot and was never again seen by his family.

Following the liberation in 1945, Eli joined a kibbutz in Warsaw, hoping to make *aliyah*. Travelling in freight cars, the journey was marked by many starts and stops. In Southern Germany they were stopped by Russians at a checkpoint and kept there for several weeks. One of the freight cars carried a group of 100 teenage war orphans whose leader had suddenly disappeared. Without discussing this with anyone, Eli perceived that all the basic anchors of life had evaporated from these children's lives, and he

quickly stepped in to alleviate the crisis. He moved into that freight car and became the group's leader, mentor, protector, and father figure. He brought them to the *Feldafing* DP camp, organized them into a kibbutz, and provided them with shelter, food, and clothing. Within a year he arranged for the group to make *aliyah*.

Eli arrived in the United States in 1952 with his wife, Diana, whom he had met and married in *Feldafing*. Eli began by selling camera parts door to door in midtown Manhattan, and within a decade he became president of Shaeffer Pen Latin America. Diana, his loving wife for 57 years, predeceased him in 2004.

In the mid-1970s he was responsible for opening the door to resumption of diplomatic relations between Israel and Poland following the Six-Day War. Eli was in the forefront of Holocaust remembrance in this country. His remarkable journey led him to organize the first synagogue-based *Yom Hashoah* commemoration in 1964; found the American Federation of Jewish Fighters, Camp Inmates and Nazi Victims; establish the world's first academic chair in Holocaust studies at Yeshiva University; publish *Martyrdom and Resistance*, the first newspaper devoted to Holocaust issues; found and chair (1981) the American & International Societies for Yad Vashem, an organization that has remitted over \$100 million to Yad Vashem; and establish the Diana Zborowski Center for the Study of the Aftermath of the *Shoah* at Yad Vashem.

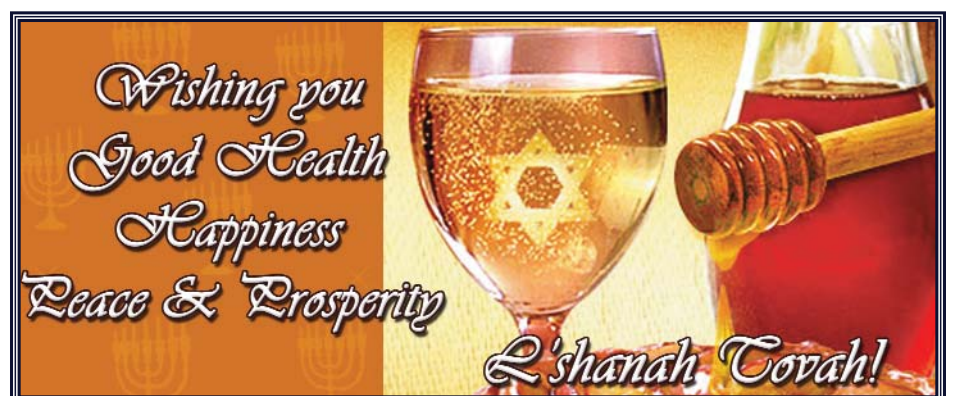
To ensure the memory of the Holocaust in the future, Eli spearheaded the Young Leadership Associates of the American Society for Yad Vashem, a group that will shepherd the cause of remembrance from generation to generation.

He is survived by his wife, Dr. Elizabeth Mundlak Zborowski; his daughter Lilly; his son Murry; nine grandchildren; his brother Marvin; and his sister Tzila.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said, "Death is the end of doing, not the end of being." Eli Zborowski has ceased doing for us, but he will live on in the hearts of the many people whose lives he touched.

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WARSAW GHETTO LIQUIDATION REMEMBERED IN CITY

A ceremony commemorating the liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto was held in the city for the first time.

It marked the 70th anniversary of the day that the Germans began mass deportations of Jews to *Treblinka*, on July 22,



A woman attaches a ribbon with Jewish names onto the fence of a former Jewish orphanage in Warsaw, Poland, during commemorations marking the 70th anniversary of the first transport of Jews from the Warsaw ghetto to the *Treblinka* death camp.

1942. More than 250,000 people were deported to the Nazi death camp.

Israel's deputy minister of education, Menachem Eliezer Mozes, at the ceremony quoted excerpts from the diary of Hil-

lel Seidman, who wrote about the underground yeshivas and the involvement of Orthodox Jews in armed resistance in the ghetto.

Pawel Spiewak of the Jewish Historical Institute said that children were the greatest victims of the Holocaust.

"Only 500 children survived in Warsaw after the 'Great Action,'" he said.

Later, a march of remembrance passed through the streets of Warsaw. Several hundred people from Poland and Israel walked on the road opposite the one on which Janusz Korczak went with the children from his orphanage instead of saving himself from certain death. From *Umschlagplatz*, the site of the deportation, the marchers continued to the site of Korczak's orphanage.

At the end of the march Rabbi Michael Schudrich, the chief rabbi of Poland, said that "We are not the same people we were an hour ago. We have this march of remembrance, march for life, and we must remember not the perpetrators but the victims."

HOLOCAUST MUSEUM WITH FOCUS ON ORTHODOX JEWS TO OPEN IN BROOKLYN NEXT SPRING

According to a UJA study conducted last year, 23 percent of Brooklyn's 2.4 million residents are Jewish, including an estimated 9,000 Holocaust survivors, the largest survivor population outside of Israel. Kings County is the heart of New York City's Orthodox Jewish community, with enclaves in neighborhoods such as Borough Park, Flatbush, and Crown Heights. Now, New York's most Jewish borough will also include its own Holocaust museum, geared towards religious Jews.

"Jewish children in Brooklyn aren't getting much exposure to the Holocaust," explained the new center's director, Rabbi Sholom Friedmann. "A museum in such a Jewish-heavy area makes sense."

The Kleinman Family Holocaust Education Center is anticipated to be opened next year as Brooklyn's first Holocaust museum, as well as the first Holocaust museum in the world to focus exclusively on Orthodox Jews. According to the center's Web site, the mission of the Kleinman Family Holocaust Education Center is "transmitting an appreciation of the spiritual and moral heroism" of the Jewish victims.

The center's building is four stories high and consists of a museum, a research library, and an interview room where the elderly can chronicle their experiences from the war. City officials are requesting families whose relatives were victims of the Holocaust to donate relics such as photo-

graphs and paperwork from the Nazi era. The museum is also collecting religious artifacts from the Holocaust, including books, Torah scrolls, and ritual garments such as tallisim, or prayer shawls.

The donations were "primarily from Borough Park," according to the center's designer, David Layman.

The faith and religious devotion of the victims is a recurring theme that will be shown throughout the museum. Rabbinical rulings and responsa written in the ghettos and camps will be on display at the museum, including a ruling which permitted Jews in the ghettos to eat non-kosher food. "The Orthodox were singled out. They were more noticeably Jewish," explained Rabbi Friedmann.

One elderly Washington Heights woman recently donated her German visa from January 1939 showing that she was one of the last Jews to escape the country.

"These facts need to be documented, so that there is no question that this war really happened," said Norman Gold, 55, a Crown Heights resident who is donating his parents' marriage certificate. "It is critical that the next generation is brought up knowing about this." Gold's parents were the first Jewish couple to be married at the displacement camp in *Landsberg*, Germany, just a few months after the Nazis were defeated in 1945.

ANTI-SEMITISM IN FRANCE DROPS IN 2011, STUDY SHOWS

A study, released recently, recorded 389 incidents of anti-Semitism in France in 2011, compared to 466 in 2010, making it the lowest number in ten years.

However, the number of violent anti-Semitic incidents remained the same as that recorded in 2010, and there was even a rise in the severity of the violence.

The main source of the drop in recorded anti-Semitic incidents was owing to the decline in malicious graffiti and slanderous letters. The number of recorded attacks stood at 127, which mainly included damage to property, vandalism, and direct violent attacks. The report also recorded 144 cases of malicious threats, threatening actions, and curses, and 46 anti-Semitic publications. About 50% of the total number of anti-Semitic incidents occurred in greater Paris.

Christophe Bigot, the French ambassador to Israel, said in a press conference that the French government has made a great effort to defeat the phenomenon, and has taken action via the police and educators. He added that there is still work to be done.

Bigot also said the French government has been waging a merciless campaign against anti-Semitism for the last few years. In 2003, France passed a law that imposes harsh penalties on people who commit racist or anti-Semitic attacks, and in 2004 government approved a plan to upgrade security for Jewish religious and cultural institutions. Thorough work is also being conducted in France's education industry, with an emphasis on Holocaust awareness, in cooperation with the Holocaust museum in Paris.

LITHUANIA TRACKS HOLOCAUST WAR CRIME SUSPECTS

Lithuania has concluded the first phase of a study aimed at identifying over a thousand Lithuanians suspected of killing Jews in the Baltic state during the Holocaust.

Terese Birute Burauskaite, head of the Vilnius-based Genocide and Resistance Research Center, told Agence France Presse she will make a full list of suspected war criminals available to justice authorities.

"Historians have reviewed 4,268 names mentioned publicly. Following our investigations, it was reduced to 1,034 people," Burauskaite told AFP, adding she expected that number to double as the investigation is completed by the end of next year.

"Our historians believe there could have been around two thousand people (in Lithuania) who murdered Jews" during World War II, Burauskaite said.

"These are people who probably held the gun in their hand," she stressed.

A five-member team launched the investigation in 2010 after an Israeli Web site published a list of possible war criminals,

including respected top anti-Soviet fighters, causing outrage in Lithuania.

Burauskaite said historians found no evidence that the leaders of the 50,000-strong Lithuanian anti-Soviet resistance movement in 1944-1953 could have participated in the Holocaust.

Researchers say it is up to prosecutors to decide whether the list will be made public.

A majority of those on it were already sentenced by Soviet authorities, some to death, and Lithuania "has no information that any murderer of Jews is now living in Lithuania," Burauskaite said.

Under the Nazi occupation of Lithuania in 1941-1944, around 195,000 Lithuanian Jews perished at the hands of the Nazis and local collaborators.

No more than 5-10% of the country's pre-war Jewish population of over 200,000 survived the Holocaust.

Dubbed the "Jerusalem of the North," prior to WWII Lithuania's capital Vilnius was a major hub of Jewish culture and learning.

LATVIANS PAY ANNUAL TRIBUTE TO WAFFEN SS FIGHTERS

Nearly 1,500 Latvians paid tribute in March to soldiers who fought in Nazi Germany's *Waffen* SS divisions, while nearby Russians held a counterprotest to recall war crimes committed against Jews and other minorities.

For many Latvians the annual procession from a Lutheran cathedral to the Freedom Monument in downtown Riga, the capital, is a memorial event for Latvian SS soldiers, known as Legionnaires, who fought for independence during World War II.

However, Latvia's minority Russians, who make up about one-third of the nation's 2.1 million people, consider the ceremony an insult to the millions who fought and died in the struggle against Nazi Germany.

"The only possibility to fight for the restoration of Latvia's independence was in the Legion," said Alriks Vebers, 44, a Latvian who came to lay flowers in honor of a great-uncle who fought in the *Waffen* SS. "And the Latvians didn't have a choice in the division's name."

Latvia, which gained its independence after World War I, was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1940, then by Nazi Germany a year later, and again by the Soviets in 1944. The country regained its independence in 1991 after the Soviet Union collapsed.

About 250,000 Latvians fought alongside either the Germans or the Soviets — and some 150,000 Latvians died in the fighting.

Nearly 80,000 Jews, or 90 percent of Latvia's prewar Jewish population, were killed in 1941-42, two years before the



An elderly Latvian takes part in a ceremony to honor soldiers who fought in a *Waffen* SS unit during World War II.

formation of the Latvian *Waffen* SS unit — which some Latvians claim shows the unit could not have played a role in the Holocaust.

Today, Latvia's government distances itself from the ceremony, but many see it as a sign that Latvia has failed to acknowledge a dark page in its history.

"This is a state-sponsored legitimization of fascism," said Dovid Katz, a Yiddish scholar based in Vilnius, Lithuania, pointing to some lawmakers' support of the ceremony. "The worst of European history is being glorified here."

GERMANY INVESTIGATES NAZI FOR MASSACRE OF UKRAINIAN JEWS

German prosecutors have launched an investigation into a 91-year-old man suspected of taking part in a 1942 massacre of over 300 Jews from the *Zhytomyr* ghetto in Ukraine, a local daily reported.

"There is suspicion that this man is guilty of involvement in the murder of 360 people," spokeswoman Petra Hertwig for the *Cottbus* prosecutor's office told the *Markische Allgemeine* daily, according to the AFP.

"We're looking into whether there is also material for other investigations," she added, without revealing details.

The man, referred to only as Herbert N., belonged to the SS commando suspected of having killed Jews, including women and children, from the *Zhytomyr* ghetto.

In October 1942, 60 Jews from the ghetto were driven in trucks to a forest approximately 15 kilometers (nine miles) from *Zhytomyr* in central Ukraine, where six

German soldiers killed them and tossed their remains into a mass grave.

The following month 30 other soldiers from the commando massacred 300 more Jews in similar circumstances by shooting them in groups of 60, according to the daily.

One of the major obstacles facing the investigation lies in the difficulty of rounding up witnesses 70 years after the massacre. The first witness to report the slaughter in 1947 was a prisoner of war in the then-Soviet Union and died in 1971.

In 1985, the prosecutor's office in the western city of *Wiesbaden* abandoned proceedings against the head of the unit responsible for the massacres amid doubts over the truth of witness testimony, according to the AFP.

Herbert N.'s name first surfaced when the state body tasked with uncovering Nazi criminals was searching for witnesses in another case.

CLAIMS CONFERENCE STEPS UP AID TO GREEK HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, which administers Holocaust reparations from Germany, said that it would give \$272,000 for 2012 to the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece for social services to Nazi victims. The Claims Conference had provided \$86,000 in 2011.

Some 5,000 Jews are living in Greece, including more than 500 Holocaust survivors who have seen their living conditions and social services deteriorate rapidly as the country struggles with the fifth year of a harsh recession.

Government pensions have been slashed, income from property rentals has fallen significantly, and there have been steep tax hikes and price rises. At the same time, state social services and medical assistance have been significantly reduced.

"Today's economic crisis has made these survivors more vulnerable than ever at a time in their lives when they most need aid," Gregory Schneider, executive vice president of the Claims Conference, wrote in a report on the new assistance.

"The Claims Conference is taking dramatic and immediate action to help ease their situation as much as possible and to prevent a crisis from becoming a catastrophe for this vulnerable population."

Greece's prewar community of about 78,000, most of whom lived in the northern port city of *Thessaloniki*, was nearly wiped out entirely in the Holocaust.

The Claims Conference also said that with the rise of the Golden Dawn party — a fascist party with a Nazi swastika-like flag and Holocaust-denying leader — it also would fund an educational program on anti-Semitism for the first time in Greece.

An allocation of nearly \$120,000 will go to the Jewish Museum of Greece, which is establishing a program on anti-Semitism that includes a traveling classroom version of the museum's exhibit.

"For survivors in Greece, already grappling with the catastrophic consequences of the government austerity plan, the emergence of this party adds another dimension to the upheaval that has already made their old age more difficult," Schneider wrote.

BRITISH SCHOOLS DROP HOLOCAUST FROM HISTORY LESSONS SO AS NOT TO OFFEND MUSLIMS

BY HOWARD PORTNOY, EXAMINER

A report by Britain's Department for Education and Skills notes that an increasing number of schools are dropping the teaching of the Holocaust from history lessons to avoid offending Muslim students. The report, titled *Teaching Emotive and Controversial History*, also observes that many teachers are reluctant to discuss the Crusades because the lessons frequently contradict what is taught in local mosques.

It gets worse. The website Family Security Matters reports:

"In an effort to counter 'Islamophobia' in British schools, teachers now are required to teach 'key Muslim contributions such as algebra and the number zero' in math and science courses, even though the concept of zero originated in India."

The article further notes that 30 non-Muslim students at Parkview Primary School in Scotland were required to visit a mosque in Glasgow. During the two-hour-long field trip, in April of 2012, the children were instructed in the practice of *wudhu*, ritual washing to make the supplicant wor-



Elementary school students in Scotland visit the Bait ur Rehman Mosque.

thy of prayer before Allah. Family Security Matters maintains that the students were also instructed in the recitation of the shahada, the Islam declaration of faith, which states, "There is no god but Allah and Mohammed is his messenger."

Muslim leaders are demanding that Islamic preachers be sent to every school in Scotland to teach children about Islam, ostensibly in an effort to counter negative attitudes about Muslims.

In London, 85 of 90 schools have implemented "no pork" policies, reflecting a nationwide trend toward banning pork from lunch menus, all once again to avoid offending Muslim students.

The question that naturally arises is whether any of this bend-over-backward pandering would be taking place had the hijackers who commandeered the four jetliners used as missiles on September 11, 2001 been anything other than Muslim. Taking an alternate hypothesis — that the attacks had been carried out by, say, murderous Zionists — would New York City public schools be mandating the teaching of Hebrew in grades 2 through 5?

Officials had placed last November at the city's *Zmievska Balka* mass grave that noted "mass killing by the fascists of captured Soviet citizens." It replaced a plaque from 2004 that did mention the Holocaust.

A ruling on the matter is expected later this year, according to Matvey Chlenov, the RJC's deputy executive director. Chlenov told JTA that city officials wrote a memo warning that mentioning the Holocaust could lead to "ethnic unrest."

"We believe the new plaque is a parody more than any case of anti-Semitism or deliberate Holocaust obfuscation," Chlenov said. "We nonetheless believe the original plaque at *Zmievska Balka* must be restored. It's a matter of basic recognition of the identity of the victims."

ANTWERP TO BUILD HOLOCAUST MONUMENT NAMING CITY'S VICTIMS

Antwerp Mayor Patrick Janssens announced plans to build a monument to commemorate the Belgian city's Jews murdered in the Holocaust.

"It is unacceptable that unlike other European cities, the municipality of Antwerp has never erected a single monument in memory of the history" of the Holocaust, Janssens said at a City Hall ceremony commemorating the 70th anniversary of the first deportation of Antwerp's Jews.

The city's only monument to the Holocaust was at the initiative of the Forum of Jewish Organizations, which represents Flemish Jews, Janssens said.

Janssens announced the plans to erect a monument and engrave into it the name of every Antwerp Jew known to have been murdered in the Holocaust.

In addition, he said, the municipality will soon unveil a memorial plaque at City Hall with the proposed text acknowledging the complicity of Antwerp's municipal authorities in the deportation of the city's Jews.

According to the proposed text, the transports were "organized by the Nazis in close cooperation with the municipal authorities [which were] in charge of the police. Dozens of policemen were involved. Most cooperated obediently, some exercised violence. A few policemen resisted, and sabotaged the August 27 transport. Others tried to save Jews."

The text also says that more than 10,000 Jews from Antwerp were deported, and that the police were involved in the detention of more than 3,000. "Almost all of the deportees perished in Auschwitz-Birkenau," it reads.

Eli Ringer, honorary chairman of the Forum of Jewish Organizations, called the ceremony "impressive."

He added, "Complicity of local authorities was a complex issue. On the one hand, there was widespread cooperation on the part of Leo Delwaide, who was mayor then. On the other, we have testimonies that he personally helped some Jews save themselves."

NAZIS' DESCENDANTS MARCH WITH HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

Some 50 descendants of Nazi SS and *Wehrmacht* took part in a "reconciliation march" with Holocaust survivors through Poland's extermination camps.

Their relatives massacred the Jews, and now they are marching together with Holocaust survivors to commemorate the tragedy.

Over 50 members of the German delegation are descendants of members of *Wehrmacht*, police, or SS, who were directly involved in the annihilation of Europe's Jews. They joined together with the survivors in a "reconciliation march" that made stops at Poland's extermination camps.

The 420 participants met at the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp, the starting point of the march which went through *Treblinka*, *Kielce*, *Warsaw*, *Sobibor*, *Chelmno*, *Majdanek*, and *Belzec*. A memorial ceremony was held at each of the sites.

At the opening ceremony, one of the descendants of a Nazi SS officer asked for forgiveness for her grandfather, an electrician who installed the electrified barbed wire fence at Auschwitz-Birkenau and wired the camp's gas chambers.

Other descendants spoke at the opening ceremony in an effort to try to begin to rec-

tify the unspeakable bitterness that divides the two peoples.

The idea to hold the event was raised last year during a convention in honor of the aid offered by evangelical Christian groups to Holocaust victims. Deputy Speaker of the Knesset Lia Shemtov (Yisrael Beiteinu), who



Participants in the "reconciliation march" in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

was behind the Knesset convention, was representing Israel in the march.

The main ceremony took place in Warsaw. Shemtov said she was very excited to be the keynote speaker at the event. "These are incredible teenagers who discovered their tragic connection with the Jewish people and decided to follow this truth while seeking forgiveness and absolution from the Holocaust survivors," she noted.

GERMANS TO PAY HOLOCAUST RESTITUTION TO FORMER SOVIET UNION VICTIMS

In what the Holocaust Claims Conference is calling a "historic breakthrough," the German government has decided to pay restitution to victims of Nazi Germany now living in the former Soviet Union.

The group of 80,000 living survivors of the German genocide attempt had never received any compensation.

Former US Ambassador to the European Union Stuart Eizenstat, the Claims Conference's Special Negotiator, praised Germany for "its willingness, so long after World War II, and in such challenging economic times today, to acknowledge its still ongoing historic responsibility." The Chairman of the Claims Conference claimed the group has been working for decades to get the country to pay restitution to this group of victims.

The compensation package comes just days after a German court's decision to ban ritual circumcisions, halting one of the most fundamental practices of Jewish faith

and raising an uproar of protest throughout the Jewish world.

Estimates are that the new compensation package will be worth approximately \$300 million.

Most of the money will come from the Hardship Fund, and will consist of one-time payments of approximately \$3,150 to Jews who fled the Nazis during their eastward push. Applications for Jews from Ukraine, Russia, and other non-European Union countries in Eastern Europe will begin November 1.

Victims from the east will also now receive as much restitution as victims from western countries — approximately \$370 per month.

Germany also decided to relax eligibility rules for those who receive restitution payments for being forced to go into hiding. Eligibility had only been for those who went into hiding for at least 12 months. Now the eligibility threshold will be six months.

HUNDREDS GATHER TO MARK MASSIVE HOLOCAUST POGROM IN RUSSIA

More than 1,000 people gathered at *Rostov-on-Don*, which 70 years ago witnessed the worst Holocaust atrocity in Russia.

Wearing arm bands marked with a Star of David, the crowd marched to the mass grave of approximately 27,000 people executed by German soldiers near the city in 1942. Most of the victims were Jewish, according to the Russian Jewish Congress.

Leading the procession was Rabbi Meir Lau, a Holocaust survivor and former chief rabbi of Israel.

Last year the memorial site became the subject of a legal fight between Kanner's organization and local government. The Russian Jewish Congress petitioned the court about a memorial plaque that city of-



BOOK REVIEWS

THE BOY: A HOLOCAUST STORY

The Boy: A Holocaust Story.

By Dan Porat. Hill and Wang: New York, New York, 2010. 262 pp. \$11.76 paperback.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

Photographs capture a moment. Looking back on them, though, we instinctively “fill in” the “before” and “after” of them. In sum, we recall what was happening at that particular time with that boy or girl, man or woman, with us in the picture. We move on to remember where they came from. We think about all they did in their lives and, hopefully, are doing. Indeed, the culmination of our efforts gives “life” to the picture, regardless of whether those in it are in this world or the next!

But what of the photographs taken where those looking only see the moment? What of the photographs taken where no one really knows, or barely knows, the people in them — who they are, where they are, what happened to them then, earlier, or later? Who tells the story behind these “orphaned” pictures? And when it comes to the Holocaust, sadly, there are so very, very many!

Dan Porat, in his unique volume entitled *The Boy: A Holocaust Story*, has taken on this burden when it comes to an iconic photograph — an “orphaned” picture — of the Holocaust period. It is a photograph we have all seen. It graces Porat’s book jacket. It is the heart-wrenching image that foregrounds the little Jewish boy with his hands up, accompanied by other hapless Jews captured and then most all — if not

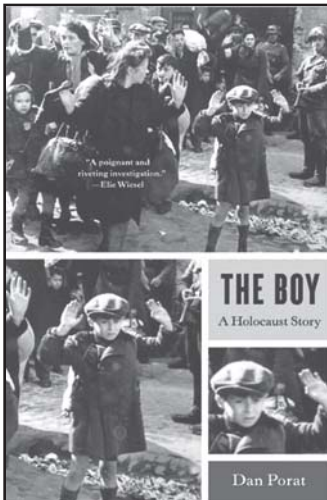
all — of them killed by the relentless Nazis in their murderous liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto.

How does Porat go about giving this image its deserved story? He traces the lives of five individuals who are either directly responsible for the moment captured by the camera, have actually been identified as being in the photograph, or may very well be in the photograph. Among the five he closely examines are the lives of SS general Jürgen Stroop, the Nazi responsible for the hellish finality of the entire Warsaw ghetto; and Josef Blösche, an SS officer, and his SS comrade, Heinrich Klaustermeyer, who were nicknamed “the two Frankensteins” by the ghetto population. When they entered the Warsaw ghetto, death accompanied them. Both Blösche and Klaustermeyer are in the photograph. Blösche is the SS man pointing a machine gun at the boy. Klaustermeyer stands “slightly behind him and to his right.” Finally, Porat tries his best to identify the little Jewish boy in this iconic image.

Thus, when it comes to Stroop, we read about how this lowly clerk, drawn to the omnipotent power offered those who joined the Nazi party and especially its SS, attained endless promotion, recognition, and special favor in the eyes of Heinrich

Himmler because of his raw brutality. Because of this special favor, Himmler sent Stroop to Warsaw to supervise the head of the SS there, Dr. Ferdinand von Sammern-Frankennegg, in his liquidation of the ghetto. With Stroop there Himmler knew for certain the job would get done! And, in fact, Stroop did quickly replace von Sammern-Frankennegg, who was unable to do it! Finally, Stroop, proud of his work in the ghetto, authored the 125 -page report — *The Jewish Quarter of Warsaw Is No More!* — sent to his superiors. The report included fifty-two photos, including the one which is the subject of Porat’s volume here under review. Its caption read: “Pulled from the bunkers by force.” Interestingly, in later years this report would help condemn him.

In 1939 Josef Blösche (an individual actually in the above noted photo), a Sudeten-German and an early activist in the Sudeten-German party, eagerly jumped at the opportunity to train as a policeman in the local SS. Fighting Germany’s enemies sounded much more exciting than working the family farm or being a waiter at his father’s inn. In short, by 1941, he was a member of an *Einsatzkommando* in the Soviet Union capturing and soon killing “Jews, Gypsies and Soviet sympathizers.”



COURAGE WAS MY ONLY OPTION

Courage was my only option: The Autobiography of Roman Kent.

By Roman Kent. Vantage Press, 2008. 384 pp. \$26.95 hardcover.

REVIEWED BY MICHAEL BERENBAUM

A new type of Holocaust literature has emerged over the last few years: survivors memoirs written by men and women who were children during the Holocaust. Those who were eighteen when they survived are now eighty; those who were younger have now entered their retirement years and have the time to reflect and look back. Because they were young when they survived, many had the opportunity to resume their interrupted education in the United States or Canada. In coming years, it is likely we will be reading the works of people who were younger and younger during the Nazi years. We are likely to see vivid recollections of their homes, somewhat less precise memories of the Shoah itself, and much space devoted to its aftermath.

Survivors — adults and children — tend to divide their memoirs into three distinct chapters: Before, During and After. Even in this exceptional memoir, Roman Kent follows the pattern of his peers. His memoir is a Holocaust story and so much more.

A child of affluence, he was the son of a major Lodz manufacturer who employed many non-Jews in his factories and who

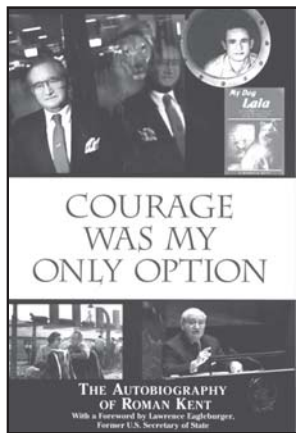
enjoyed friendships and good working relationships with them. His father’s skills and his relationships were to preserve the family, at least for a time.

Roman, né Kniker, devotes the initial chapters to his life before the ghetto began, and they are a vivid portrayal of family life. It was a self-described happy life before. That life ended with the German invasion of September 1, 1939, which endangered all Poles — Jews and non-Jews — and imperiled the life of Jews in ways that they could not imagine.

Invasion was followed by persecution and then ghettoization. In the case of Lodz, the ghetto was ruled with an iron hand by Mordecai Chaim Rumkowski, who thought he could save most Jews, but only if some Jews were sacrificed in order to save more. Unlike other ghetto leaders, Rumkowski sacrificed those most vulnerable, those least capable of working — the young and the old — and allowed, or even facilitated, their deportation to *Chelmno*, the death camp where gassing began on December 8, 1941.

To Kent’s credit, that is not the story he tells. Still a child, he was not a privileged or even an astute observer of the ghetto, and writes compellingly of his own experience within it. He has also repressed his memories at critical points. For example, he is able to describe how his father died in the ghetto but cannot recall his own feel-

(Continued on page 14)



THE CHURCH, THE RED CROSS, AND THE NAZIS’ GREAT ESCAPE

Nazis on the Run: How Hitler’s Henchmen Fled Justice.

By Gerald Steinacher. Oxford University Press, 2012. 416pp. \$34.95, hardcover.

REVIEWED BY ROBERT GERWARTH

On July 14, 1950, a German “technician” whose forged papers declared him to be “Ricardo Klement” arrived in Argentina. Despite his disguise, the Argentinean authorities were well aware that “Mr. Klement” was, in fact, Adolf Eichmann, the man responsible for coordinating the eastward deportations of millions of European Jews to extermination camps during the second World War. Eichmann was not the only senior Nazi official who managed to escape prosecution by fleeing to South America: several other serious war criminals, including the former Auschwitz camp doctor, Josef Mengele, had similarly evaded justice and left behind their old lives for a fresh, carefree existence in the New World.

The story of fugitive “Nazis on the run” is not really a new one, but it has been subject to numerous elisions and distortions ever since it first came to the world’s attention in the 1960s. According to the most widely known conspiracy theory about the mass escape of Nazis to South America — first circulated by the Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal and then popularized by Frederick Forsyth’s best-selling thriller *The*

Not long after that, he was posted to Warsaw and then the Warsaw ghetto, where “on April 18, 1942, the Gestapo commanders assigned Blösche to a special mission with division IV-B4 (the division headed by Eichmann and responsible for the arrest and deportation of Jews).” By the time Stroop arrived in Warsaw in 1943, Blösche, known for his cruel sadism, had “wholeheartedly” participated in the ghetto’s demise, most especially in numerous mass executions. In later years, he too would pay for these crimes . . .

As regards research on the unidentified boy in the photo, Porat writes about a boy who would have been the right age. He, too, survived terrors unimaginable. He lost his mother. He lost his father. Cared for by his uncle and aunt, he was in Warsaw for a time. At one point, the boy, now a grown man, remembers raising his arms in frightened surrender to the Nazis. But is he the boy in the photo . . . now a surgeon? Even he isn’t sure. Then again, when it comes to the boy in the photo, does it really matter? Isn’t he every Jewish child who lived during that terrible time . . . who lived or died?

In sum, just from these examples, one can see that Porat goes far in giving breadth and depth to this iconic photo. He surely gives it much more life and story than it had. Indeed, he succeeds in giving this “orphaned” picture a home with us all.

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

Odessa File — these flights were organized by a secret society of ex-SS men named ODESSA (Organization of Former SS Members), which paid for forged visas and travel costs with money stolen from their Jewish victims.

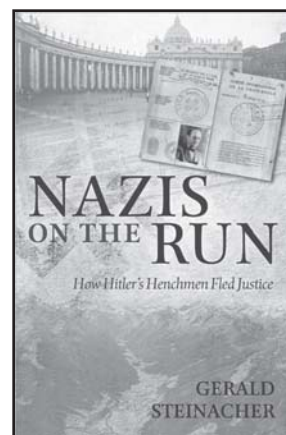
In his new book, *Nazis on the Run*, the Austrian historian Gerald Steinacher deconstructs this version of events. After six years of intensive research on the subject,

Steinacher concludes that ODESSA never really existed as a centrally organized network. Instead, he offers a detailed and chilling analysis of the three organizations that were in fact largely responsible for facilitating the escape of German war criminals: the International Red Cross, the Catholic Church, and the American CIA. Steinacher emphasizes from the start that the motivations of this unlikely coalition of escape

route facilitators can only be understood against the backdrop of the start of the Cold War, during which Communism seemed a much more pressing problem than prosecuting former Nazis, however implicated they were in the Holocaust.

The CIA’s attitude towards ex-Nazis — and in particular to former SS “intelligence experts” — was essentially pragmatic: after Germany had been defeated and relations with the USSR had begun to deteriorate,

(Continued on page 13)



OUT OF THE SHADOW, POLISH RESCUERS OF JEWS CELEBRATE HERO'S HONOR

For decades, nobody really talked about them: the thousands of Poles, mostly Roman Catholics, who risked their lives during World War II to save Jewish friends, neighbors, and even strangers.

Those discovered by the Germans were executed quickly, often with their entire families. And then, under Communism, there was silence. The Jewish survivors would send letters and gifts in gratitude. But the Polish state ignored them. The rescuers themselves kept quiet, out of modesty, or shame, or fear of anti-Semitism. Sometimes they worried gift packages from the West would arouse the jealousy of neighbors in a period of economic deprivation.

"It wasn't considered anything to be proud of," said Ewa Ligia Zdanowicz, an 81-year-old whose parents hid a Jewish teenage girl in their home during the war.

That era is over.

A moving gathering of dozens of the rescuers in July in Warsaw shows just how much has changed in Poland in the 23 years since Communism fell. Dozens of Polish rescuers were celebrated and dined over a kosher lunch in an

upscale hotel where Jewish representatives took turns praising them in speeches for their heroism.

The rescuers themselves deny that they are exceptional. With each other, they discuss other things, often their failing health, avoiding memories of executions and other brutality that they witnessed and which still bring them to tears.

"We did what we had to do," said Halina Szauskiewicz, 89. "There was nothing heroic about it."

But the Jewish officials honoring them see it differently.

"You, the righteous of the world, think your behavior was ordinary, but we all know it was something more than that. It was truly extraordinary," Stanlee Stahl, the executive vice president of the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, the group that organized the luncheon, told them in a speech.

Those in attendance have all been recognized by Israel's Yad Vashem as "Righteous Among the Nations," non-Jews sometimes referred to colloquially as "Righteous Gentiles."



Ewa Ligia Zdanowicz, an 81-year-old whose parents hid a Jewish girl during World War II.

These days it isn't just grateful Jews who remember. The Polish state also honors and celebrates them, as appreciation grows for Poland's vanished Jewish com-



Israeli Ambassador Zvi Rav-Ner in Poland speaks to representatives of dozens of elderly Poles who helped save Jews during World War II.

munity—the largest in the world before the Holocaust. The Polish state also celebrates their heroism now, after decades of ignoring them, considering it long overdue recognition befitting a democratic nation.

But it's also clear that officials seize with pride on this historical chapter to fight the stereotype of Poland as an anti-Semitic country—a label that is painful to many Poles and which carries some truth, but also masks a hugely complex reality.

Many Jews today still remember anti-Semitism that their families suffered in Poland, not just from Germans—who carried out the Holocaust—but also from Poles whom they had lived alongside for

centuries. Yet Poland also produced the greatest number of rescuers. To date, more than 6,350 non-Jews in Poland have been recognized by Yad Vashem, more than any other country, Israeli Ambassador Zvi Rav-Ner said.

Yad Vashem's statistics show that after Poland, the Netherlands has the greatest number of "righteous"—5,204—followed by France's 3,513.

Rav-Ner travels around Poland to bestow Yad Vashem's "Righteous Among the Nations" award on newly recognized rescuers, and he has observed how Poles have become less and less afraid of having their wartime actions being made public. In a handful of cases, people asked to have quiet ceremonies at the Israeli embassy rather than public events in their communities. But this is increasingly a rare exception.

"Now most are proud to have it made public. That's the big change," Rav-Ner said. "Before, people did go to Israel and met the people they saved, but in a hushed way. I wouldn't say secretive, but they didn't make it public."

The gathering was tinged with a sad awareness that the number of the rescuers is dwindling. At the last such gathering, in 2010, 75 of them showed up, but now there were only about 55.

Stahl said that in the meantime, some have died, while others are now simply too weak to leave their homes.

CHINESE RADIO SEEKS HOLOCAUST STORIES FROM FORMER JEWISH REFUGEES

BY REVITAL BLUMENFELD, HAARETZ

In December 1938, just weeks after *Kristallnacht* in Germany, Dr. Ernst Michaelis left his home in Silesia for a meeting of the government health council in Berlin. Like other Jews in Germany, he wanted to get his family out of the country, and sought to immigrate to a country where his medical services were needed.

"We wanted to flee to the United States but that wasn't an option. The immigration quota had already been filled," Michaelis' daughter, Marianna Barli, said this week. "The British didn't permit immigration to Israel, even though we had family there. They said *Harbin*, in Manchuria, was looking for a doctor, and Father signed a contract with the local hospital immediately."

Barli said the family boarded a luxury Italian liner in March 1939 for *Shanghai*, but when they arrived they discovered the Manchurian authorities had closed their borders. The Michaelis family was instead brought to *Tianjin*, China, where physicians were in short supply.

China Radio International wants to broadcast stories such as the Michaelis family's story. To that end, station officials recently invited former residents of China who now live in Israel to enter "My Chinese Experience," a story competition.

CRI broadcasts to more than 40 nations around the world; its Israeli news website is the first official Chinese media outlet in Hebrew. The station has already received several stories from Israelis describing their Holocaust-era experiences in China. The winner, who will be announced this summer, will receive a "heritage" tour to China with his or her family, courtesy of CRI. Officials at the radio station say the main purpose of the project is to strengthen the ties between the Chinese and Israeli peoples, as well as to document

and preserve the remnants of the largest immigrant group in China during the wartime period.

Barli, 81, the only child of Dr. Michaelis and his wife Gertrude, was just eight when she arrived in China, but she still clearly remembers the colorful sights, the fragrant smells of spices, and the unimaginable change to her life.

"I had a happy childhood," Barli related. "I went to a Jewish school in the city's English quarter, where I made friends, some of whom I am still in touch with. We swam in the summer and ice-skated in the winter," she said.

"We had lots of rice, chicken, and eggrolls at home, because our manservant was Chinese." As she remembers it, "The Chinese were generally very poor, and many of them died of infection and disease. Despite the fact that we were wealthier, they never took advantage of us and were always good to us. They were grateful to us for giving them work: they worked in the restaurants and cafes of the Jews and they worked in Jewish homes," said Barli, who lives in Tel Aviv with her husband. They have two children and six grandchildren.

The Jews of Tianjin attended synagogue on the Shabbat and holidays, held traditional Friday night dinners, ate improvised matzot on Passover and organized costume balls on Purim. During the war their numbers were reinforced by groups of Jewish refugees from France, Germany, England, Austria, Italy, and the Netherlands.

The refugees turned to the task of reconstructing in *Tianjin* the community life they

led before the war. "We lived in a bubble, without newspapers or news from outside. We didn't know what was happening abroad," Barli said, adding, "We knew there was a war and that people were being sent to concentration camps, but no one imagined that the Germans, the cultured intellectuals we had known, could be so cruel. It was only after the war that we realized the extent of the killing and of the Holocaust, and we were in shock, in deep mourning. My father received a letter from the Red Cross that said his parents were taken from Germany to Auschwitz, and there it was, the entire family was obliterated."

Around 28,000 European Jews found refuge in China during World War II. After Japan's invasion of China in 1937 and occupation of large parts of the country, the local government was replaced by a puppet regime that left the marine and land access routes undefended.

"When [World War II] broke out, the last of the refugees began to reach China. Thousands of Jewish refugees came by boat, most of them via

Shanghai, which already had two established Jewish communities: The Baghdadi community, which had 1,000 members, and a Russian-Jewish community that was 7,000 strong," explained Irene Eber, professor emerita of East Asian studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. "The British, who ruled *Shanghai*, told the communities that were there, 'We don't have money to take care of the Jews, you'll have to take care of the ones who came,' and that's what most of the Baghdadis did,

since they were richer than the Russians," she said.

The Wertans family fled Warsaw for Vilnius in September 1939, when war broke out. In June 1940, when the Soviet Union invaded Lithuania, it was rumored that a compassionate Japanese consul in *Kounas*, Chiune Sempo Sugihara, was issuing transit visas to Japan to Jews, with the aim of getting them to China. The Wertans left all their worldly goods behind. They traveled by train first to Moscow and then to *Vladivostok*, on the Trans-Siberian Railway, before sailing to southern Japan.

"The family was happy during its stay in Japan," Nina Admoni nee Wertans, the only child of Yaacov and Yehudit Wertans, relates. Admoni's husband Nahum Admoni was head of Israel's Mossad in the 1980s. The Wertans stayed in *Kobe*, Japan, for around six months, before they were apprehended and forced to leave. They went to China.

Oral histories and documents, including personal diaries from the period, reflect the rich cultural life of *Shanghai's* Jewish community. "Between 1939 and 1941 the refugees created a cultural life," Eber said. "People came without any property and, despite the difficulties, published 10 newspapers in German and four in Yiddish. In addition, there was theater in Yiddish and in German, in which Polish Jews who came from Japan were particularly active."

The situation worsened after the United States entered the war, in the wake of Japan's December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, after which the Japanese secured their hold on large parts of China. The Japanese imposed restrictions on the Jews; in *Shanghai* they separated the established Jewish communities from the war refugees and made members of the Baghdadi and Russian communities the liaisons between the Japanese occupation government and the refugees.



Nina Admoni spent her Holocaust-era childhood in China.

SURVIVORS' CORNER

RELUCTANT HERO

BY STEVE LIPMAN, THE JEWISH WEEK

Posing as a member of the Gestapo, Kew Gardens resident Fred Friedman rescued several dozen Jews in wartime and postwar Hungary.

Slovakian-born Holocaust survivor Fred Friedman, who has lived in the same corner house in the Kew Gardens neighborhood of Queens for 46 years, turned 90 a few days before *Yom HaShoah*.

Friedman, a retired plastics manufacturer, spent the final years of World War II living in Budapest with false papers, in German, which identified him as Nagy Istvan, a non-Jew. And with other false papers that identified him as a member of the Gestapo.

During the war, he traveled by train around Hungary, which was an Axis supporter of Germany during most of World War II, to rescue endangered Jewish children and adults. To look the part of a member of the Nazi secret police, he wore a Gestapo-type leather jacket, the type of green Tyrolean hat with a small feather stuck in the band favored by Gestapo officers, and sometimes a Hungarian-style swastika. He carried a German pistol, but never had to use it.

Friedman's story mirrors that of Salomon Perel, the German Jew who successfully posed during the war as a member of the Hitler Youth and was portrayed in the 1990 German-language film *Europa Europa*. While Perel managed to save his own life, Friedman risked his own life to save others'.

Raised in a traditional Jewish home in Presov, central Slovakia, and educated at

a yeshiva, Friedman (original name, Ferdinand), made himself think as a non-Jew while living incognito in Budapest. "During the war I was a gentile – I was a gentile through and through."

After the war, while working in Budapest as a translator for the predecessor of the KGB, he continued to bring to safety Jews who faced deportation to forced labor in Russia.

Friedman says he lost count of how many people he saved. "Maybe it's 60, 70."

Some of his old friends know what he did during and after the war, but he is reluctant to discuss it; he has turned down frequent requests to be honored by Jewish organizations.

Why did he agree to speak to *The Jewish Week*?

"My wife forced me," he says — as a legacy for his children.

At weddings and other *simchas*, Friedman's wife, Ruth, hears stories about his heroics from strangers, people who recognize him, people he saved. Sometimes their children approach her. "People come up to me and ask, 'Do you know what your husband did for me, for my mother, for my sister? These stories will go on and on.'"

In the Friedmans' house, which is lined with Jewish art and Jewish books, are a few plaques that Friedman accepted at low-key events.

"I don't want to get paid by human beings if I did something" in this world, he says; in the next world, God will judge.

"He's a very humble person. He's an extraordinary human being," says Rabbi Aryeh Sokoloff, spiritual leader of the Kew Gardens Synagogue-Adath Yeshurun, Friedman's congregation. "He risked his life on more than one occasion."

Friedman, in his early 20s at the end of the war, embarked upon his rescue missions a few years earlier because he could not say no to a mother.

In 1942, when the deportations of Slovakia's Jews to Nazi death camps were underway, he smuggled himself over the



Survivor Fred Friedman saved Hungarian Jews during the war by impersonating a member of the Gestapo.

border, eventually reaching relative safety in Hungary, after beating up a ruffian in his hometown who had threatened him; he later sneaked back to surreptitiously recover a stash of jewels and dollars his father had hidden in the family's home, funds that supported Friedman when he lived in a rented apartment in Budapest.

With contacts in the underground, he obtained the realistic-looking false documents — the I.D. papers to establish his Aryan identity; the Gestapo papers in case he needed to travel around the country to help other Jews. "I knew I would need them."

In June of 1944, as the Nazi roundups of Jews in the rural parts of Hungary were escalating, Friedman visited a young Jewish mother who was recuperating in Budapest from recent surgery. The mother, who lived in *Debreceen*, Hungary's second-biggest

city, 120 miles from the capital, told Friedman her two young daughters back in *Debreceen* faced imminent deportation, to their likely deaths.

He offered to help.

Friedman took the train to *Debreceen* and located the woman's daughters. Traveling in the train's third-class section, the least conspicuous section, he delivered them — and a dozen other children and three mothers, who had begged him to help — to safe farms outside of Budapest.

"All survived" the war, Friedman says.

Along the way that day, at one train station, he aroused the suspicion of a Hungarian gendarme; the group with Friedman appeared to be Jewish. Friedman showed the police officer his Gestapo I.D. "He got white." No one who valued his life challenged the Nazi secret police. Friedman's group left the train station intact.

Later, Friedman made other trips to other cities, again rescuing children who faced deportation. Sometimes, he "saved people off the street" in Budapest, he says. Each time, he relied on his false papers to fend off suspicion. Each time, he lived by his wits and ability to pose as someone he wasn't.

"He's a great actor," says his wife.

Close calls?

Yes, Friedman says.

Scared?

"Sometimes."

Why did he do it? Why did he succeed?

A man of faith, he shrugs, at a loss for words. It clearly makes him uncomfortable to cast himself as a hero or as a recipient of divine providence.

"He did what he thought needed to be
(Continued on page 15)

THE MAN WHO SAVED 900 JEWISH BOYS INSIDE A DEATH CAMP

BY BRAD ROTHSCHILD, THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

For decades, Jews around the world have sought out examples of non-Jews like Raoul Wallenberg and Oskar Schindler, who defied the Nazis to prevent the murder of Jews. In Israel, the Righteous Among the Nations is Yad Vashem's highest honor, and over 23,000 people have been awarded this status since the program began in 1953.

The criteria established by Yad Vashem are straightforward: Jews can nominate individuals who provided substantial assistance to save Jews, provided that said assistance was not given with the expectation of financial gain.

In July, 67 years after the end of the Holocaust and over 20 years since his death, Yad Vashem granted this honor to Antonin Kalina, a Czech citizen who saved over 900 boys in *Buchenwald*.

There is little known about Kalina. He was born in 1902 in the Czech town of *Trebic* and in adulthood became a Communist functionary. After the Nazis took over Czechoslovakia, he was imprisoned in the *Buchenwald* concentration camp from 1939 until 1945. After the war he seems to have lived an unexceptional life; he died in 1990. During his time in *Buchenwald*, however, Kalina distinguished himself as a true hero and rescuer of children.

In late 1944 and early 1945, as the Red Army pushed the Germans out of eastern Europe, the Nazis began liquidating their death camps, placing Jewish prison-



Antonin Kalina.

ers on brutal "death marches" toward the German hinterland. Countless thousands of Jews died on these brutal marches westward — some died from the cold, others starved to death along the way, and others were shot when they failed to keep up. Those who survived were put into concentration camps scattered throughout Germany, *Buchenwald* included.

Buchenwald, a camp established in 1937 to imprison criminals and political oppo-

nents of the Nazi regime, swelled to over 100,000 inmates in the final months of the war.

Included in this influx of Jewish prisoners were a large number of boys, many between the ages of 12 and 16. These boys had come from all over Europe and had already undergone unimaginable horrors: ghettoization, transports, brutalization, privations, starvation, and often the loss of their families. By the time they arrived in *Buchenwald*, they were already hardened veterans of the camps, having learned how to survive under the most inhuman conditions. Upon their arrival at *Buchenwald*, thanks to Kalina and his deputies, their situation improved dramatically.

Kalina had risen to a position of influence in the underground, which ran the day-to-day operations of the camp on behalf of the Nazi SS. Kalina and his fellow prisoners decided to place the youths in a special barrack, far away from the main part of *Buchenwald*, deep in the filthy quarantine area where the SS was loath to go. This barrack, number 66 in the "little camp," became known as the *Kinderblock*, or children's block. Antonin Kalina was the block elder. In this capacity, he went to extraordinary lengths to ensure the survival of the boys he placed there.

Unlike the other prisoners in *Buchenwald*, the boys of block 66 did not have to leave their barrack for roll call — instead of

assembling with the rest of the camp twice a day no matter the conditions outside, the boys were counted inside. Also, unlike the other prisoners, the boys of 66 did not go to work. Remaining inside the bunk was a tremendous advantage for the boys and a factor that certainly helped keep many of them alive. Conditions within the block were also better than in other parts of the camp — the boys had access to blankets, and at times extra food rations.

Significantly, the block elders didn't beat the boys, something almost unheard of within the Nazi camp system. Let there be no misunderstanding: despite the relative advantages, this was still a concentration camp full of fear, disease, hunger and death. But Kalina did what he could to mitigate this reality for the boys of *Kinderblock* 66, often at great personal risk.

As the Allied forces closed in during the war's frantic final days in early April 1945, the Nazis decided to eradicate *Buchenwald's* Jews. The camp's commanders ordered all Jews to report for assembly; they were to be forced out on more death marches.

Kalina refused to comply with this order. He commanded the boys not to report to the assembly and changed the religion on their badges — the Jewish boys were now listed as Christians — so that when the SS came around looking for Jews, Kalina told
(Continued on page 15)

BOOK URGES GERMANS TO QUIZ DYING NAZI GENERATION

BY DAVID CROSSLAND, SPEGEL ONLINE

German historian Moritz Pfeiffer asked his granddad what he did in World War II, and then fact-checked the testimony. His findings in a new book shed light on a dying generation that remains outwardly unrepentant, but is increasingly willing to break decades of silence on how, and why, it followed Hitler.

Germany has won praise for collectively confronting its Nazi past, but the subject has remained a taboo in millions of family homes — with children and grandchildren declining to press their elders on what they did in the war.

At least 20 to 25 million Germans knew about the Holocaust while it was happening, according to conservative estimates, and some 10 million fought on the Eastern Front in a war of annihilation that targeted civilians from the start. That, says Moritz Pfeiffer, makes the genocide and the crimes against humanity a part of family history.



Hans Hermann K. was an infantry officer in the Wehrmacht. The picture shows him and his wife Edith in 1942.

Time is running out. The answer to how a cultured, civilized nation stooped so low lies in the minds of the dying Third Reich generation, many of whom are ready and willing to talk at the end of their lives, says Pfeiffer, 29, who has just completed an unprecedented research project based on his own family.

"The situation has changed radically compared with the decades immediately after the war," Pfeiffer, a historian at a museum on the SS at *Wewelsburg* Castle, told *Spiegel Online*. "The generation of eyewitnesses evidently wants to talk now; at least that's my impression. Towards the end of one's life the distance to the events is so great that people are ready to give testimony."

"Immediately after the war, conversations about it between parents and children appear to have been impossible because it was all too fresh," Pfeiffer continued. "Now the problem is that no one is listening to that generation anymore. As a source of information, one's relatives are largely being ignored. But one day it will be too late."

NEW APPROACH TO QUESTIONING RELATIVES

Oral history has become increasingly popular, even though personal reminiscences are chronically unreliable as they are distorted by time. But Pfeiffer took a new approach by interviewing his two maternal grandparents about what they did in the war, and then systematically check-

ing their statements using contemporary sources such as letters and army records. No one has done this before.

He juxtaposed his findings with context from up-to-date historical research on the period and wrote a book that has shed new light on the generation that unquestioningly followed Hitler, failed to own up to its guilt in the immediate aftermath of the war and, more than six decades on, remains unable to express personal remorse for the civilian casualties of Hitler's war of aggression, let alone for the Holocaust.

His recently published book, *My Grandfather in the War 1939–1945* (published in German only), is based on the interviews he conducted in 2005 with his grandfather, named only as Hans Hermann K., who was a career officer in a *Wehrmacht* infantry regiment. His grandmother Edith was too ill to be interviewed at length, but he analyzed many of her letters. Both died in 2006.

Both of them supported the Nazi regime, and Pfeiffer admits that they were morally "contaminated," like millions of ordinary Germans of that generation. He describes his grandmother Edith as a "committed, almost fanatical Nazi."

"NO ONE CAN SAY WHAT THEY WOULD HAVE DONE"

But the project wasn't an attempt to pass judgment on his grandparents, says Pfeiffer. He only wanted to understand them.

"No one today can say what they would have done or thought at the time," he said. "I believe that people will learn a lot if they understand how their respected and loved parents or grandparents behaved in the face of a totalitarian dictatorship and murderous racial ideology," Pfeiffer said.

"Dealing with one's family history in the Nazi period in an open, factual, and self-critical way is an important contribution to accepting democracy and avoiding a repeat of what happened between 1933 and 1945."

Hans Hermann K. was so good at goose-stepping that he was briefly transferred to a parade unit in Berlin. Edith joined the Nazi Party and was so zealous that when she married Hans Hermann in 1943, she provided documentation tracing her Aryan roots all the way back to the early 18th century — even SS members were "only" required to verify their racial purity back to January 1, 1800.

During the course of his research, Moritz Pfeiffer found large gaps, contradictions and evasive answers in Hans Hermann's testimony — regarding his purported ignorance of mass executions of civilians, for example.

GRANDFATHER FOUGHT IN FRANCE, POLAND, SOVIET UNION

Hans Hermann was a lieutenant in the famous 6th Army and fought in the invasions of Poland, France, and the Soviet Union, where he lost an eye in September 1942 when a shell exploded near him.

His wound probably saved his life. Shortly after he was evacuated back to Germany for treatment, his unit was sent to *Stalingrad* and virtually wiped out. Only 6,000 men survived out of the more than 100,000 that were taken prisoner by the Red Army at *Stalingrad*.

Few would disagree that Germany as a nation has worked hard to atone for its past, unlike Austria and Japan, which have cloaked themselves in denial. Germany has paid an estimated €70 billion in compensation for the suffering it caused, conducts solemn ceremonies to commemorate

the victims and, above all, has owned up to what was done in its name.

Companies and government ministries have opened up their archives to historians to illuminate their role in the Third Reich, and a late push in prosecutions of war criminals is underway to make up for the failure to bring them to justice in the decades after the war.

But millions never confronted their own personal role as cogs in the Nazi machinery.

Hans Hermann was no different, even though he readily agreed to talk to his grandson.

He was born in 1921 to an archconservative, nationalist family with military traditions in the western city of *Wuppertal*. His father, a furniture store owner, regaled him with stories about his time as a lieutenant in World War I, and it was instilled in him at an early age that the war reparations of the Versailles Treaty were exaggerated.

The store boomed after Hitler took power because the new government provided cheap government loans for married couples to buy kitchen and bedroom furniture.

In the interview, Hans Hermann was frank about his attitude towards Jews in the mid-1930s, when he was in his early teens and a member of the *Jungvolk* youth organization, which was affiliated with the Hitler Youth.

Asked by Moritz whether he thought at the time that the racial laws banning Jews from public life and systematically expropriating their property were unfair, he said:

"No, we didn't regard that as injustice, we had to go with the times and the times were like that. The media didn't have the importance then that they do today."

"WE HAD TO KEEP OUR MOUTHS SHUT"

But Hans Hermann didn't join the Nazi party, and said in 2005 that he opposed the *Reichskristallnacht*, the November 9, 1938, pogrom organized by the Nazi regime in which thousands of Jewish stores and synagogues were attacked and burned.

"That wasn't right. We were angry about the violence and the fire in the synagogue, that wasn't our thing," he said. "That was the SA, that was the SS, we rejected that ... But we couldn't do anything, we had to keep our mouths shut."

Asked about the invasion of Poland and the executions of civilians, Hans Hermann was evasive, at first describing relations between the German army and Poles as "friendly" and saying he knew nothing about mass shootings of Polish civilians at the time.

When pressed by Moritz, however, he admitted he knew about killings being committed by the SS, but added that the *Wehrmacht* had nothing to do with it — a typical attitude that reflected the long-held myth that regular German soldiers weren't involved in atrocities.

Pfeiffer said he found his grandfather's indifference to the suffering of the Polish population, 6 million of whom died in the war, "staggering" but, again, typical of the response of many Germans of his generation.

In 1941, Hans Hermann took part in Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union. He was in the Infantry Regiment 208 of the 79th Infantry Division, and he said he knew nothing about criminal orders such as the German army's in-

famous "Commissar Order" — that all Soviet political commissars detected among the captured must be killed.

"HARDLY BELIEVABLE"

Asked about the Commissar Order, Hans Hermann said: "I didn't hear anything about that, don't know it. We were behind the combat troops who were the ones taking prisoners."

Pfeiffer refuted the claim that his grandfather's unit took no prisoners. He found the war diary of the 79th Infantry Division,



German infantry in *Stalingrad*. Hans Hermann lost an eye in a shell explosion weeks before his unit was transferred to *Stalingrad*, where it was virtually wiped out. The injury likely saved his life.

which records that 5,088 Russian soldiers were captured between August 5 and August 31 alone. Between September 20 and 25, a further 24,000 were taken prisoner.

Even the ones who weren't shot dead on the spot had a slim chance of survival. More than 3 million of the 5.7 million Red Army soldiers captured by German forces in World War II died, a proportion of almost 60 percent.

Pfeiffer said his grandfather, as a front-line officer and company commander, would have been subject to the order to weed out the political commissars from among captured Red Army soldiers and have them shot. The historian said he couldn't ascertain whether his grandfather ever had to make such a decision. But historical evidence exists that the 79th Infantry Division carried out the order.

Also, historians have proven that the 6th Army, which Hans Hermann's division was part of, carried out war crimes and massacres, and assisted in the murder of 33,771 Jews in the ravine of *Babi Yar* in Ukraine at the end of September 1941.

Pfeiffer said it was "hardly believable" that his grandfather didn't know anything about the mass killings.

Hans Hermann also said: "The Bolsheviks were our enemies, that was clear and we had to be guided by that. But those who greeted us with salt and bread on their doorstep, they couldn't be enemies, we treated them well." He didn't say what happened to civilians who didn't greet the troops with salt and bread.

"SPELLBOUND BY THE WORDS OF THE FÜHRER"

Pfeiffer's book also presents letters written by his grandmother Edith that showed her ardent support for Hitler. On November 8, 1943, she wrote to her husband after hearing Hitler speak: "I am still totally spellbound by the words of the Führer that were stirring and inspiring as ever! I glow with enthusiasm ... One feels strong enough to tear out trees."

In his interview, Hans Hermann expressed criticism of the Allied bombings of German cities. "How could that be possi-

(Continued on page 15)

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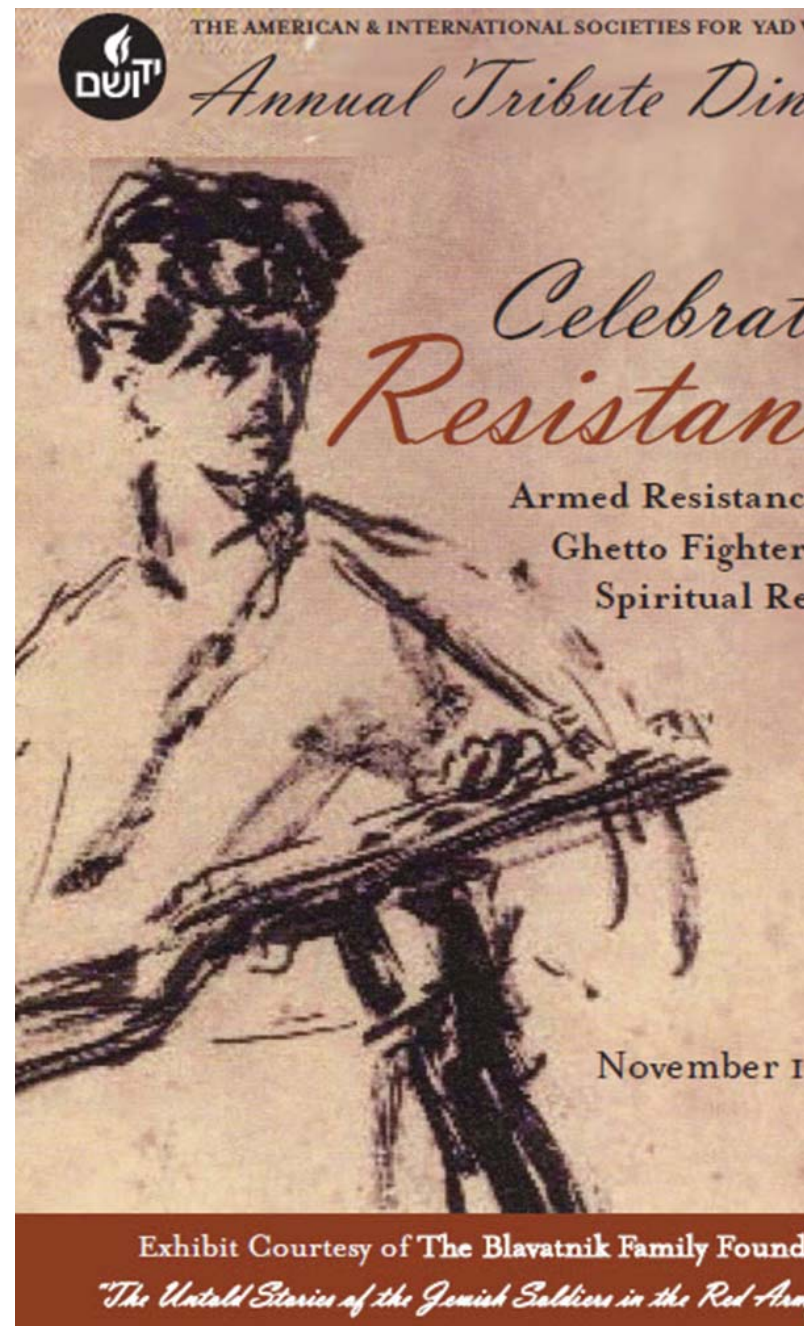


Exhibit Courtesy of The Blavatnik Family Foundation

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Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers
811 Seventh Avenue at 52nd Street
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Reception 4:30 PM
Dinner 6:00 PM

Dietary Laws Observed Black Tie Optional

FRANK AND CESIA BLAICHMAN



Frank Blaichman, the only member of his immediate family to survive the Holocaust, was born in the small town of *Kaminonka*, Poland. He was 16 years old when the German army invaded Poland in 1939. With German decrees and regulations intended to isolate and deprive Jews, young Frank immediately began taking risks in an effort to help his parents and his six brothers and sisters. He used his bicycle and rode from neighboring farms to larger cities, buying and selling goods at each destination. Refusing to wear the Star of David armband, he travelled through fields avoiding the police and German soldiers.

As the situation became more desperate, Frank was determined to keep his freedom. Encouraged by his family, he sought refuge in the forests and soon found other Jews determined to fight. He had never held a weapon.

Always on the move, and after succeeding in acquiring weapons, the group became a remarkable guerilla force. After ridding their area of German collaborators, they engaged in acts of sabotage: hit-and-run attacks against German supply lines carrying military essentials to the eastern front – disrupting Nazi communication – protecting over 300 hidden Jews. By age 21, Blaichman became the youngest Lieutenant and Platoon Commander of his unit, which remained under Jewish command until liberation.

Cesia Pomeranc was born in *Vlodovo*, Poland. Cesia, along with her brothers Yurik, Jack and Abie, escaped to the woods from a Nazi work camp. They too joined a Jewish fighting force operating in the *Lublin* area of Poland. Cesia and Frank met when their two partisan units joined forces. Following liberation they married and soon emigrated to the U.S. Frank became a builder and developer. They have two children and six grandchildren.



In the 1980s the Blaichmans, along with Eli Zborowski, z"l, spearheaded the effort resulting in the building of the Jewish Fighters Monument at Yad Vashem.

Blaichman delivered the keynote address at an unveiling ceremony that included the then Minister of Defense Yitzhak Rabin and U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz.

In 2009 Frank Blaichman published *Rather Die Fighting*, which chronicles his and his wife Cesia's harrowing and moving story.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM

The American Society for Yad Vashem (ASYV) was founded in 1981 by a small group of survivors, spearheaded by Eli Zborowski, z"l, its founding Chairman. The ASYV is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization whose goal is to work in partnership with Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, and support Yad Vashem's efforts in the areas of commemoration, education, research, capital improvement, and special projects through its development efforts and ongoing cultural and educational programming.

Today, the Society draws support from the contributions of Jewish survivors, community members, and major philanthropists, and also relies on a cadre of volunteers who give their gift of time. Over the years, the Society and its thousands of supporting members have been an important contributing partner to most major Yad Vashem projects, including the new museum, while continuing to provide vital operating support.

ANNUAL TRIBUTE DINNER

The Society's major endeavor is its Annual Tribute Dinner, which draws more than 1,000 guests, including business and cultural leaders, government officials, and members of the diplomatic corps. In conjunction with the dinner, the Society publishes a commemorative photo journal which pays tribute to the vibrancy of Jewish life in prewar Europe and to the collective accomplishments of Holocaust survivors in the United States and Israel. Each year, the Society bestows Remembrance Awards on two distinguished individuals or couples who have made outstanding contributions to the Cause of Remembrance.

EDUCATION

The Society's Education Department, in collaboration with Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies, sponsors seminars and conferences for teachers involved in

Holocaust education. In addition, it offers student internships, professional development conferences and a Speakers Bureau.

PUBLICATIONS

The American Society for Yad Vashem publishes the bi-monthly newspaper *Martyrdom and Resistance*, which it inaugurated in the fall of 1974. It is the first and oldest continuously published periodical devoted to the Holocaust in the USA, and has become a valuable resource for scholars and researchers. Its unique quality lies in the combination of news and features about all aspects of the Holocaust and resistance, including book and film reviews, reports about educational programs, and an overview of survivor activities.

YOUNG LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATES

The Society's Young Leadership Associates (YLA) was inaugurated in 1997. Caroline Massel is its Founding Chairperson. Current Chairpersons are Jeremy and Abbi Halpern and Jeffrey Wilf. The YLA has an active board and a growing membership of young people, among them children and grandchildren of survivors. The YLA has undertaken the task of developing ongoing programs fostering Holocaust education and remembrance, and has branched out nationally with these programs.

STATEMENT BY ASYV CHAIRMAN

ELI ZBOROWSKI, Z"l

"The American Society for Yad Vashem is the first among Holocaust organizations to have built an infrastructure which extends not only to the second generation of survivors, but now to the third. Working together with our children, grandchildren, and their friends, we will surely perpetuate this unique institution that Abba Eban described as 'one of the most significant landmarks in the moral history of mankind.'"



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REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

TELLING THE STORY, TEACHING THE CORE

BY LEAH GOLDSTEIN

On 18–21 June, 355 educators from 54 countries worldwide gathered at Yad Vashem for the Eighth International Conference on Holocaust Education. Over half of the participants at the biannual conference were graduates of educational seminars at the International School for Holocaust Studies.

"The goal of the conference was different from any other preceding it," explained Director of the International School Dorit Novak. "The Holocaust is being instrumentalized more than ever to address a range of issues not necessarily directly related to it, which opens the door to diminishing, equating, and manipulating its history and memory. We therefore felt an urgent need to 'get back to the basics,' to teach the fundamental aspects of the event, in order to equip educators with the knowledge and tools necessary to deal with these current trends."

"Yad Vashem is challenged by the fact that people today use the word Holocaust in many different ways," said Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev. "We must go back to the core issues of the Shoah: what actually happened in the ghettos, the camps, and during the 'Final Solution,' how the Nazi party instituted an atmosphere of hatred and dehumanization, and what were the Jewish – and non-Jewish – responses to it all. Only then

can we use this knowledge to promote the protection of human rights, the prevention of genocide, and the fight against intolerance – all of which are important and relevant topics in today's world."

The conference was divided into three days, each one focusing on specific objectives.

Minister of Education Gideon Sa'ar opened the conference, and Yad Vashem



Participants at one of the 81 professional workshops held during the three-day conference.

Chairman Avner Shalev presented a lecture on "Educational Challenges in the 21st Century." The first day was then dedicated to learning, with some 25 experts from Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research as well as prominent Israeli academics presenting the main topics in Holocaust education, including the history of anti-Semitism,

Nazi racial ideology, armed resistance, rescue attempts, the death camps, and postwar trials, as well as the roles of faith, literature, and art in the Holocaust.

Day two concentrated on teaching, with 81 workshops (nine in Spanish) focusing on how to make the core issues relevant in the classroom. "The participants received the latest and most effective pedagogical tools in the field in order to make the Holocaust a relevant and significant issue in their teaching," explained conference director Ephraim Kaye, Director of International Seminars for Educators at the International School for Holocaust Studies. "In addition, eighty percent of the presenters were Yad Vashem graduates, who illustrated to their peers the most successful examples of what actually works in the classroom."

The final day was directed toward "special interest groups": Holocaust and Jewish museum directors; Jewish educators in formal and informal Jewish education; and teachers of Holocaust curricula on the college level. One of the panel speakers was the Rev. James LaMacchia, Associate Chaplain and Religious Studies teacher at Saint Mark's School in Maryland (USA). "Many US secondary schools only offer a unit on the Shoah scattered

among such courses as American History or World Literature," explained LaMacchia. "Because it is easy to trivialize and diminish the Holocaust in a 'culture of victimization,' educators are challenged to present the Shoah in all of its complexity, so that students understand its absolutely unique character and continuing resonance in world history and politics. Despite an ever-expanding curriculum, we educators must take the time to present the social, political, economic and cultural factors and events that led to the Shoah."

LaMacchia also stressed the success of utilizing survivor testimony in Holocaust education, explaining that it "allows the students to connect the history to real people whose lives were directly affected by the events." In fact, the final session of the conference was devoted to this very issue, with nine Holocaust survivors offering participants the chance to hear their personal stories and ask pertinent questions about their firsthand experiences during the war. Internationally renowned author and Holocaust survivor Dr. Samuel Pisas gave the final keynote speech, which included sections of Leonard Bernstein's Symphony No. 3, *Kaddish*, combined with Pisas's composition, "A Dialogue with God." The lecture was in memory of Benefactors of the International School and the conference Izzy and Babs (Ruth) Asper, z"l.

"BLACK SABBATH" AND THE HOLOCAUST OF GREEK JEWRY

BY DR. NIKOS TZAFLETERIS

"I had barely arrived – I was wearing my Sabbath clothes – when they started beating us... They dealt out so many blows that people fainted; then they would lift them up, pour water over them, and start again."

So recounted Holocaust survivor Yitzhak Nechama, a victim of the notorious "Black Sabbath" of the Jews of Salonika (*Thessaloniki*), at the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem. Nechama's testimony was the only one given at the trial concerning Greek Jewry during the Holocaust. During the proceedings, several relevant pictures were presented to Nechama. At one point he paused. "That is me," he said, pointing to the picture of a young man being forced to crouch and hold out his arms. "If you could have seen me... the state I was in after those 'exercises,' the blows I got, why – I do not know. I didn't do anything to them, I didn't owe them anything, and they gave me a bloody thrashing. And not only me, but my family too."

"Black Sabbath," which took place 70 years ago in July 1942, marked the beginning of the end of the once-thriving Jewish community of Salonika, which had lasted hundreds of years and in its heyday boasted the largest Sephardic community in the world. In fact, Jewish settlement in the Greek peninsula can be dated back to the third century BCE, and there is much evidence for a continuous presence of the Jewish Diaspora in Greece for many years

before the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.

Throughout the years, Jews in Greece formed one of the most diverse and multicultural communities in Europe. Wealthy entrepreneurs, Jewish scholars, and great



Yitzhak Nechama being humiliated during the "Black Sabbath" in Salonika.

rabbis lived side by side with humble laborers and craftsmen.

After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, the ancient Greek-speaking Romaniot culture blended with the Sephardim, as many Sephardim found shelter in the peaceful lands of the welcoming Ottoman Empire. These Jews spoke Ladino, a language based on an old

Castilian Jewish dialect, and formed several communities, mainly in the Balkan Peninsula and Northern Africa. As years went by, they began to settle in Salonika, a major port city on the Greek Peninsula, establishing a remarkably large and vibrant Sephardic community. It was then that Salonika became known as "Mother of Israel," "Little Jerusalem," "Jerusalem of the North," and "Jerusalem of the Balkans."

At the beginning of the 20th century, Salonika's Jewish citizens numbered almost 80,000. By the 1930s, however, the Jewish population had somewhat declined to almost 56,000. After the invasion of the Fascist Axis powers in 1940–41, Greek Jews fought bravely side by side with their gentile compatriots, first against the Italians, and then the Germans. Colonel Mordehai Frizis was the first ranking officer of the Greek army to die during the fierce battles with the invading Italians, and hundreds of other Greek Jews gave their lives or were wounded for their homeland during the six-month fight in the mountains of Albania.

Following the German conquest of Greece, experts of the well-known *Sonderkommando* Rosenberg scoured the country, seizing precious manuscripts, valuable heirlooms, priceless collections, and other important objects belonging to the Jewish communities that had lived and thrived in Greece for hundreds of years.

The country was then divided into three occupational zones: under the Germans, the Italians, and the Bulgarians. The Italian zone was the largest, but the lootings and

anti-Semitic activities were confined to the German-controlled area, including Salonika. The Jews living under German occupation experienced the same discrimination by the Nazi regime as other Jewish communities in Europe: property confiscation, public humiliation, forced labor under horrendous circumstances, torture, and execution as "Communists." But the most disturbing of all measures was initiated by the *Wehrmacht* on 11 July 1942, a Sabbath day. The *Wehrmacht* commander of northern Greece, General von Krenzski, ordered all the Jewish males aged 18 to 45 years to assemble at Eleftheria (Freedom) Square to be registered for forced labor. The registration turned out to be a theater of deliberate and pitiless humiliation of some 9,000 Jews. Many different *Wehrmacht* units participated, forcing the men to form lines under the blistering sun for hours, forbidding them to wear any kind of head covering.

"They were having fun," Nechama recalled. "SS policemen would come and push people out of the line, hitting them and fooling around. And at the windows, other Germans were taking photos and applauding."

The Jews of Salonika were ultimately deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. There, some 50,000 Jews from Salonika – almost the entire Jewish community – would be murdered, and the "Jerusalem of the Balkans" lost forever.

The author is a research fellow from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki at Yad Vashem's International Research Institute.

ISRAELI ARCHAEOLOGIST MAPS HOLOCAUST DEATH CAMP SOBIBOR

BY ARON HELLER, AP

When Israeli archaeologist Yoram Haimi decided to investigate his family's unknown Holocaust history, he turned to the skill he knew best: He began to dig.

After learning that two of his uncles were murdered in the infamous *Sobibor* death camp, he embarked on a landmark excavation project that is shining new light on the workings of one of the most notorious Nazi killing machines, including pinpointing the location of the gas chambers where hundreds of thousands were killed.

Sobibor, in eastern Poland, marks perhaps the most vivid example of the "Final Solution," the Nazi plot to wipe out European Jewry. Unlike other camps that had at least a facade of being prison or labor camps, *Sobibor* and the neighboring camps *Belzec* and *Treblinka* were designed specifically for exterminating Jews. Victims were transported there in cattle cars and gassed to death almost immediately.

But researching *Sobibor* has been difficult. After an October 1943 uprising at the camp, the Nazis shut it down and leveled it to the ground, replanting over it to cover their tracks.

Today, tall trees cover most of the former camp grounds. Because there were so few survivors — only 64 were known — there has never been an authentic layout of the camp, where the Nazis are believed to have murdered some 250,000 Jews over

an 18-month period. From those few survivors' memories and partial German documentation, researchers had only limited understanding of how the camp operated.

"I feel like I am an investigator in a criminal forensic laboratory," Haimi, 51, said near his home in southern Israel, a day before departing for another dig in Poland. "After all, it is a murder scene."

Over five years of excavations, Haimi has been able to remap the camp and has



Israeli archaeologist Yoram Haimi talking to young people from the Dror School in Israel.

unearthed thousands of items. He hasn't found anything about his family, but amid the teeth, bone shards, and ashes through which he has sifted, he has recovered jewelry, keys, and coins that have helped identify some of *Sobibor's* victims.

The heavy concentration of ashes led him to estimate that far more than 250,000 Jews were actually killed at *Sobibor*.

"Because of the lack of information about *Sobibor*, every little piece of information is significant," said Haimi. "No one knew where the gas chambers were. The Germans didn't want anyone to find out what was there. But thanks to what we have done, they didn't succeed."

The most touching find thus far, he said, has been an engraved metal identification tag bearing the name of Lea Judith de la Penha, a 6-year-old Jewish girl

from Holland who Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial confirmed was murdered at the camp. Haimi calls her the "symbol of *Sobibor*."

"The Germans didn't discriminate. They killed little girls too," he said. "This thing (the tag) has been waiting for 70 years for someone to find it."

Haimi's digs, backed by Yad Vashem, could serve as a template for future scholarship into the Holocaust, in which the Nazis

and their collaborators killed about 6 million Jews.

"I think the use of archaeology offers the possibility of giving us information that we didn't have before," Deborah Lipstadt, a prominent American Holocaust historian from Emory University, said.

She said that if the archaeological evidence points to a higher death toll at *Sobibor* than previously thought, "it is not out of

sync with other research that has been done."

Haimi's basic method is similar to what he does at home, where he does digs for Israel's antiquities authority in the south of the country — cutting out squares of land and sifting the earth through a filter. Because of the difficult conditions at *Sobibor* and the sensitive nature of the effort, he is also relying on more non-invasive, high-tech aids such as ground-penetrating radar and global positioning satellite imaging.

Based on debris collected and patterns in the soil, he has been able to figure out where the Nazis placed poles to hold up the camp's barbed wire fences.

That led him to his major breakthrough — the mapping of what the Germans called the *Himmelfahrstrasse*, or the "Road to Heaven," a path upon which the inmates were marched naked into the gas chambers. He determined its route by the poles that marked the path. From that, he determined where the gas chambers would have been located.

Along the way, he and his Polish partner Wojciech Mazurek, along with some 20 laborers, have stumbled on thousands of personal items belonging to the victims: eye glasses, perfume bottles, dentures, rings, watches, a child's Mickey Mouse pin, a diamond-studded gold chain, a pair of gold earrings inscribed ER — apparently the owner's initials — a silver medallion engraved with the name "Hanna."

Marek Bem, a former director of the museum at *Sobibor*, said the first excavations

(Continued on page 13)

THE TURKISH RESCUE NOBODY REMEMBERED

A new French book attempts to grapple with a Turkish operation to save 476 Jews from France during the Holocaust. Many of those rescued spurned their saviors thereafter, and the episode has virtually been lost to history.

BY BENNY ZIFFER, HAARETZ

I waited for my meeting with French author Ariane Bois in the lobby of the Dan Accadia Hotel in *Herzliya*, like someone waiting to meet a long-lost relative — although, officially, as I learned from reading her biographical details on the Internet, we are not really related. Nonetheless, a slight change in historical circumstances could have easily led to our paths crossing at some point.

Ariane Bois was born, just as I was, to a Jewish couple from Turkey whose family was half-Sephardi and half-Ashkenazi and who, when the Ottoman Empire began to collapse, decided to seek shelter in Europe.

Whereas my family opted for Vienna, Berlin, and Paris, her family chose only Paris, settling in one of the city's poorer neighborhoods in the 11th and 18th arrondissements. From the mid-1920s until World War II, these neighborhoods were largely inhabited by Ladino speakers from the Middle East who brought their colorful customs and lifestyle from the "old country."

The Holocaust would totally erase these primarily Jewish neighborhoods.

The Turkish government was adamant about protecting 476 souls, a small fraction of the country's ill-fated Jewish community, which numbered tens of thousands and which had seen France as a safe place of refuge. However, France abandoned these Jews and Turkey demanded that those 476 people be placed under its aegis, thereby granting them immunity from the Nazi decrees.

Those Jews who possessed a valid Turkish passport were permitted by the French authorities to return to Istanbul by rail in cars that bore the Turkish crescent and star. The journey across Europe was fraught with danger and its successful completion hinged on the fact that Turkey stuck to its position that all its citizens, regardless of origin or religion, were equal and deserved protection.

Ariane's grandfather, her grandmother and her mother — who was 10 at the time — were among the passengers on these rescue trains, which are largely unknown in the annals of *Shoah* history. One of the reasons why this mission is not given greater historiographical prominence is the fact that, for many years, Sephardi Jews were not considered among the victims of the Holocaust.

Today, 70 years after this little-known rescue operation, Bois has created a monument to it in her novel, *Le Monde d'Hannah* (*Hannah's World*), recently released by French publisher Robert Laffont. The book, written in a seemingly effortless manner, is actually the product of painstaking archival research that took the author several years, including interviews with people who traveled on those trains to Istanbul. On the basis of the research and the interviews, she constructed the plot of her novel which, while fictional, faithfully depicts the spirit of that era.

Turkey recently revived the story of the rescue trains, as part of its bid to cozy up with the European Union in hopes of admittance. Two products of those efforts are the impressive Turkish documentary film, *The Turkish Passport*, which was screened at the recent Cannes festival, and a novel that appeared somewhat earlier by Turkish author Ayse Kulin.

Kulin's historical fiction, *Last Train to Istanbul*, is commonly thought to have exag-

gerated the dimensions of the operation. Her story recounts the actions of a courageous Turkish diplomat who, according to local legend, was the Turkish version of Raoul Wallenberg (the Swedish diplomat who was instrumental in the rescue of tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews from the death camps during the Holocaust). This legend is viewed by many with a considerable degree of doubt, and to this day, Yad Vashem in Jerusalem has refused to recognize that Turkish diplomat as one of the righteous gentiles who saved Jews during the Holocaust.

Bois' story is much more modest in its heroic depictions and is thus far more persuasive.

The testimony that she obtained from Jews who traveled on the Turkish rescue trains to Istanbul and who returned to France after the war is far less dramatic than in Kulin's novel. As can be seen in *Hannah's World*, many of the passengers on these trains had no inkling as to the gravity of their situation and considered their repatriation to Turkey as something that was natural.

Bois describes how a number of Jewish women who were passengers on one of the rescue trains from Paris took advantage of a stop in Vienna because of a malfunction, got off the train and took a leisurely stroll through the Prater gardens. The children on the trains considered the entire journey to be a thrilling adventure.

Only when they returned to Paris after the war did these lucky Jews become aware of the dimensions of the Holocaust from whose claws they had been rescued. Their homes were now occupied by French citizens who were amazed to see the returnees. Several violent episodes erupted between the latter and the squatters, who claimed that they had every right to live in the homes of the Jews who were

absent during the war. In fact, one sometimes even heard the following cynical statement from the Jews' French neighbors: "While you were vacationing in Istanbul, we were suffering over here."

Hannah's World recounts a tale that, up until now, has not been told properly or has been distorted for a variety of reasons. This is the tale of Jews who, in the period of the Holocaust, were given a new lease on life thanks to the Turkish government. But this is actually a story of loyalty and betrayal. The rescued Turkish Jews never considered it their basic obligation to thank Turkey for rescuing them; furthermore, when the war ended, they abandoned the country that had saved them and returned to France. None of them ever said to themselves: "We are alive today thanks to Turkey."

Ironically, France — the country that betrayed them and, with satanic cynicism, handed them over to the Nazi murderers — was the place they longed for and where they hoped to resume their lives and integrate into society.

Bois is a striking example of a Jew of Turkish origin who has successfully integrated into French society. Nonetheless, she notes how the Jewish anxieties that her family passed on to her are vividly apparent in her day-to-day behavior. For example, she always makes sure that she never leaves the house without identifying documents, lest she be apprehended even now and sent to a death camp. In addition, whenever she enters an elevator, her heart skips a beat because she always remembers the story her mother told her when she was a child about a wheelchair-bound neighbor whom the French police threw down the elevator shaft when the Nazis were rounding up the Jews.

Bois has attempted to heal these wounds of memory in her book.

PLAYING TO LIVE

BY MONI BASU, CNN

Zhanna Arshanskaya Dawson's name is etched on the wall of a stark underground memorial in Ukraine, next to those of her sister, Frina, their parents and grandparents. She was presumed dead, like the 16,000 other Jews from *Kharkov* who perished under the Nazis in the winter of 1941.

Only, Dawson survived, as did her sister.

They lived through the Holocaust, saved solely by their musical genius. Dawson's son Greg believes his mother and aunt are the only two Jewish survivors from *Kharkov*.

He came upon their names at the memorial in 2006 when he visited Ukraine to write a book about his mother, *Hiding in the Spotlight*. After the war, she made a successful life for herself as an accomplished pianist in the United States, and had kept silent on her history for many years until her sons had grown up.

Seeing her name came as a shock to Greg Dawson. He remembers his finger freezing upon the Russian lettering; shivers shooting up his spine.

How narrowly she had escaped death, he realized.

"JUST LIVE"

Dawson's love affair with the piano began when she was 5. A year later, she performed Bach's Invention Number 1 in public.

Her father, Dimitri Arshansky, a candy maker by trade, ordered a shiny new Bechstein piano from Germany and encouraged both his daughters to study music at the local conservatory. A professor there introduced little Zhanna to Chopin's "Fantasy Impromptu." She was determined to perfect her playing of the piece.

But life as she knew it stopped with World War II. The Nazis invaded *Kharkov* in 1941. Only 14 then, Dawson remembers seeing bodies of Jews hanging from lampposts.

On a frigid December day, German soldiers stormed into the house at 48 Katsarskaya Street, rounded up her entire family and shoved them into a long line of Jews forced to march out of the city.

It was the last time she saw her house. The only possession she was able to take with her was the sheet music sitting on her piano. "Fantasy Impromptu."

"I couldn't have possibly left it," she says, thinking back to that wretched day. She didn't need the written notes to play it; she knew it by heart. But it had her teacher's scribbles on it. And it was her favorite piece of music.

The Nazis forced *Kharkov's* Jews to walk 12 miles outside the city in the bitter cold and snow. Occasionally, a mother would push her young child toward the crowd watching the exodus, in hopes that someone would have sympathy and rescue the child. If her actions were detected, the Nazis shot her on the spot, Dawson remembers.

Her family was taken to an abandoned tractor factory designed to hold 1,800 people. The Nazis forced 13,000 Jews into the barracks without warmth or food. Many people died there.

"It was inhuman," she recalls in her son's book. "The sight of women the age of my mother and grandmother made me shake in shame for the Germans."

The day after Christmas, the Jews were ordered to prepare for transportation. Dawson says her father knew they were all going to die when he saw the trucks go north. There was nothing to the north. It was a road to *Dobritsky Yar*, a road to the unthinkable.

Dobritsky Yar had two giant pits like the ones at *Babi Yar* near the city of Kiev, where the Nazis killed 34,000 Jews in two days, most machine-gunned in the back.

Dimitri Arshansky pulled out his gold pocket watch and flashed it in front of a young Ukrainian guard. He told the guard his family wasn't Jewish; to please let his little girl go.



Zhanna Arshanskaya Dawson escaped a death march by playing music.

Dawson says her father realized that he could not save both his girls — two of them running would be too much commotion. He knew Zhanna, the adventurous, free-spirited one named after Joan of Arc, had a chance to survive. As the guard took the bribe and looked away, she fell out of line and ran like the wind.

"I don't care what you do," her father told her. "Just live."

PLAYING FOR THE ENEMY

A few days later Dawson was reunited with her sister. To this day she does not know how Frina escaped the death march. Frina has never spoken of it or about anything else from that time. Dawson believes her sister was too traumatized to talk about it.

With the help of friends, the two girls made it to an orphanage and were able to obtain fake, non-Jewish identities. For the rest of the war, they were no longer their father's daughters.

"My name is Anna Morozova. I am from *Kharkov*. My sister Marina and I are orphans. Our father was an officer in the Red Army and was killed in action. Our mother died in the bombing of *Kharkov*."

Dawson said it so many times during the rest of the war that it echoed endlessly in her head.

A piano tuner at the orphanage heard her play one day and offered her and Frina jobs with a musical troupe that entertained the Germans. It was a frightening prospect, but Dawson kept thinking of her father's last words — just live. They played for Nazi generals and in front of German audiences in the city of *Kremenchug*: Bach, Beethoven, Rachmaninoff, Liszt, Brahms, Chopin.

Years later people asked her how she could have done what she did. Was it not like the musicians who played as Jews walked into gas chambers in the concentration camps?

"I was playing for the memory of my parents," she says. "I was playing to survive."

And her music, she says, was the only spot of beauty in that bleak atmosphere.

Music provided a psychological cocoon. Without it, her spirit might have broken.

There were moments when she feared they would be found out for who they really were and shot on the spot or sent to a gas chamber. One time, the German soldiers put the onus of proof that the girls were Jews on the people who rattled them out.

"We were a precious commodity for the Germans," she said. "We were more valuable alive than dead."

Months turned into years of hiding in plain view.

When the Germans began retreating, they took the musical troupe with them,

wanted her sons to experience normal, carefree childhoods. She didn't want to burden anyone.

But in the spring of 1978, when Greg Dawson was working as a reporter at the Bloomington newspaper, NBC began airing a four-part miniseries called *Holocaust*. Until then, many Americans knew little about one of the world's grimmest periods of history; perhaps they had read *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

Dawson wanted to write something for the newspaper and asked his mother to tell him more about her memories as a Russian who lived through the war.

"What she gave me was a life and death story of epochal dimensions that left me in disbelief," Greg Dawson wrote.

He was getting to know his mother all over again.

In the 1990s, his daughter, Aimee, asked the same question of Zhanna Dawson. Aimee was 14 then, and for a school project, she wanted to know what her grandmother's life was like when she was that age.

Zhanna Dawson penned an eloquent letter from Atlanta, where she had moved after her husband's death. After that, she began speaking publicly about her life and no longer kept secrets. Except one.

She had lied about her date of birth all those years ago so that the orphanage would take her in — Russian orphanages did not accept children over the age of 14. Instead of revealing her true birthday of April 1, 1927, Dawson had changed it to December 25.

Her sons celebrated mom's birthday on Christmas day, until 12 years ago, when she came clean.

"I thought it was an April Fool's joke at first," Greg Dawson says.

"But I never changed the year," says Zhanna. And she was proud to share a birthday with pianist Sergei Rachmaninoff.

She has recordings of her own concerts. And she loves to listen to music. She has expanded from classical to jazz and even popular piano music. Liberace, she says, can play like the best of them.

She cannot stand to watch television or movies with violence. She has never seen any movies about the Holocaust, not even *Schindler's List* or *The Pianist*, Roman Polanski's film about Polish musician Wladyslaw Szpilman's survival in the Warsaw ghetto. Too painful to watch, Dawson says.

However, she participated in the Shoah Victims' Names Recovery Project, which aims to memorialize each Jew killed in the Holocaust by recording their names and stories. On her family's page are photographs of her mother, Sara, and father, Dimitri, and also of Prokofiy and Yevdokia Bogancha, the couple who helped Dawson and her sister after they escaped the death march.

Through all these years she kept the five sheets of music of Chopin's "Fantasy Impromptu" that she tucked under her clothes and that have survived with her.

"How she preserved five sheets of music is beyond me," Greg Dawson says. "You know how perishable paper is."

The sheet music was Zhanna Arshanskaya Dawson's treasure; it kept her going all those years when there was so little hope for survival. It is safely locked away now in a bank safety deposit box, something for newer generations of her family to look at — and remember a survivor.

back to Berlin. There, the Jewish Arshanskaya girls walked past Gestapo headquarters and even Adolf Hitler's bunker after the Allied bombing began.

When the war finally ended in 1945, they were taken to a displaced persons camp run by a young American officer, Larry Dawson, who had a passion for music. Dawson's brother David was an accomplished viola player.

Larry Dawson arranged for a concert. Zhanna and Frina were to play for survivors of *Dachau*, the notorious concentration camp near Munich.

Zhanna Dawson remembers how nervous she was on the evening of April 13, 1946. After years of playing for the enemy, she was finally going to perform for her own people.

"These were such special people."

In front of the stage at the Landsberg Yiddish Center sat 1,200 Jews.

Gaunt. Ragged. Weary.

They exploded with applause and bravos, even though Dawson knew that technically, it was the worst she had ever played.

"This was a celebration," she says. "It was the only time I didn't care how I played. I thought again of what my father said. 'Just live.' Just play."

Soon after, Larry Dawson put the Arshanskaya girls on the first U.S.-bound ship of refugees from Germany. They arrived at Manhattan's Pier 64 on May 21, 1946, to begin their lives anew. By then, Zhanna was 19; Frina, 17.

Both won scholarships to the Juilliard School. Zhanna fell in love with David Dawson, married him, and left Juilliard before finishing her degree to join him in Bloomington, Indiana. She began performing and teaching music at the university. She had two sons and raised them without ever uttering a word about her past.

PRECIOUS PIECES OF PAPER

Greg Dawson had no idea that he was Jewish until he was grown up.

His mother says she never spoke of surviving the Holocaust because she

DR. SEUSS AND THE HOLOCAUST IN FRANCE

BY RAFAEL MEDOFF, JEWISH JOURNAL

Seventy years ago, 15-year-old Annie Kriegel was sitting in her Paris high school classroom, taking an exam, when her mother suddenly burst into the room and warned her not to come home — the Nazis were preparing to round up and deport any Jews they could get their hands on.

More than 3,000 miles away, the cartoonist known as Dr. Seuss was setting pen to paper to alert America about what was happening to the Jews in France.

Annie found a place to stay that night. The next morning, as she later recalled, she was making her way towards the city's Jewish quarter when, "at the crossing of the rue de Turenne and the rue de Bretagne, I heard screams rising to the heavens." They were "not cries and squawks such as you hear in noisy and excited crowds, but screams like you used to hear in hospital delivery rooms. All the human pain that both life and death provide. A garage there was serving as a local assembly point, and they were separating the men and women."

Stunned, the teenager sat down on a nearby park bench. "It was on that bench that I left my childhood." (Kriegel's experience is recounted in Susan Zucotti's 1993 book, *The Holocaust, the French and the Jews*.)

Over the course of the next two days, more than 13,000 Jews were rounded up

in Paris by the Germans, with the active collaboration of the Vichy French government headed by Nazi supporter Pierre Laval. The majority of those arrested were couples with children. They were held for five excruciating days in the Velodrome d'Hiver stadium, in the summer heat without food or water. Eyewitnesses described it as "a scene from hell." Then they were deported by train to the gas chambers of Auschwitz.



The brutal details of the roundup process were amply reported in the American press. *The New York Times* described the "scenes of terror and despair" in the streets of Paris, including suicides, Jewish patients dragged violently from hospital beds, and children violently separated from their parents. Unfortunately, the article was relegated to page 16.

Theodor Geisel, who drew editorial cartoons for *PM* under the pen name "Dr. Seuss," was outraged by the news from France and decided to use his cartooning skills to help publicize the plight of the Jews.

The future creator of such beloved classics as *The Cat in the Hat* and *Green Eggs and Ham* employed stark and disturbing imagery in his July 20 cartoon. He drew a forest filled with corpses hanging from the trees, with a sign reading "Jew" pinned to each body. Adolf Hitler, with extra rope draped on his arm, and Vichy leader Pierre Laval were shown singing happily.

The first words of the Hitler-Laval song, "Only God can make a tree," were taken from "Trees," a famous Alfred Joyce Kilmer poem about the unique and eternal beauty of trees. The killers' second line, however, "To furnish sport for you and me," was a lyric concocted by Hitler and Laval to celebrate their "sport" of mass murder.

In one important respect, Seuss's cartoon was prescient: unlike many of his contemporaries, he correctly perceived that France's Jews were doomed to be killed. At the time of the roundups, the Germans claimed the Jews were being sent for "work in the East," and the deportees' true

destination was generally unknown abroad.

One senior U.S. diplomat in France, S. Pinkney Tuck, urged the Roosevelt administration to take in 4,000 Jewish children who had been separated from their parents, on the grounds that they should be regarded as orphans since the Nazis would not let their parents survive. But State Department officials complained that Tuck was exceeding his authority, and Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles assured American Jewish Congress leader Rabbi Stephen S. Wise that the deportees were just being relocated for "war work."

Dr. Seuss drew many anti-Nazi cartoons during his years at *PM*, but for reasons that are unclear, he never returned to the subject of Hitler's Jewish victims.

The dangers of fascism seem to have haunted Seuss for many years to follow, however. Reworking a scene of a tower of turtles from one of his 1942 cartoons, he used the framework of what was ostensibly a child's fable to inveigh against totalitarianism in his 1958 best-seller, *Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories*. Yertle is the king of a turtle pond who exploits his fellow turtles in order to increase his power and personal glory. Furious when he realizes the moon is higher than he is, Yertle commands his subjects to form themselves into a tower so that he can stand on them and reach the sky.

Seuss said later that Yertle was meant to symbolize Hitler, and the story was a warning against fascism.

THE CHURCH, THE RED CROSS AND THE NAZIS' GREAT ESCAPE

(Continued from page 4)

the CIA was willing to give exit visas and new identity papers to middle-ranking Nazis in exchange for valuable intelligence information on the new Soviet enemy.

Even more intriguing is the role played by the Red Cross. In a genuinely fresh contribution to the subject, Steinacher establishes that the International Red Cross issued about 25,000 new identity documents to men whose past was often more than dubious. Although this assistance primarily came from individual Nazi sympathizers within the organization, Steinacher argues that all senior members of the International Red Cross knew about the misappropriation of identity documents. In particular, he demonstrates that the two presidents of the International Committee of the Red Cross in the post-war decades, Carl Jacob Burckhardt and his successor, Paul Ruegger consciously decided to turn a blind eye to the frequent abuse of Red Cross identity documentation, largely because of their latent anti-Semitism and anti-Communism.

The Catholic Church's involvement in the escape of ex-Nazis is, by comparison, well known. It has long been established that individual Nazi sympathizers within the clergy, such as Bishop Alois Hudal in Rome and the Archbishop of Genoa, Giuseppe Siri, actively supported the flight of Nazi war criminals. However, Steinacher disputes the Vatican's insistence that these men were misguided black sheep within an otherwise unblemished institution.

Instead, Steinacher argues that the "aid program" for ex-Nazis within the Church was systematic and intentional, and that it has to be understood in the context of the Catholic Church's post-war crusade for a re-Christianization of Europe.

Fearing the emergence of a "godless" Europe full of pagans and Communists, the Church was willing to help Nazi war

criminals — many of them lapsed Protestants who had left their church in the 1930s — if they converted to Catholicism. Steinacher's argument that the Vatican pursued a systematic policy of "de-Nazification through conversion" to Catholicism is unlikely to gain him many friends in Rome, but he provides plenty of evidence for his theory.

Steinacher's painstaking reconstruction of the main escape route (which led from Innsbruck across the Alps to Genoa or Rome) underlines the heavy involvement of the Catholic clergy. Along the way, numerous monasteries provided shelter for men on the run, and 90 per cent of the Nazis that escaped used that route before they embarked on a passage to South America.

Argentina, in particular, became the preferred destination for Nazi refugees. According to Steinacher's estimate, at least 350 high-ranking Nazis escaped to Argentina. The Argentinean dictator Juan Perón even hoped to attract up to half a million Germans after the war, notably military experts. New immigrants primarily had to fulfill two qualifications: they had to be skilled laborers or academically trained experts; and they were not allowed to be Communists. Ex-SS officers usually fulfilled both criteria. A Nazi past was not a requirement for an immigration visa to Argentina, but it was certainly no obstacle either.

Steinacher's book focuses on Argentina, but it also offers intriguing new perspectives on other "safe havens" in Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East. The postwar journey of former SS colonel Walter Rauff, who invented the mobile gas vans used to kill thousands of Jews along the Eastern front, exemplifies the transnational dimension of Nazi escape routes: after the war, he was first hidden by Bishop Siri of Genoa, before fleeing to Damascus in 1947. In late 1949, he used Red Cross

documentation to move to Ecuador, where he worked for the Bayer pharmaceutical company. In the early 1960s, Rauff retired to Santiago de Chile, where he died peacefully in 1984.

North Africa and the Middle East also proved to be very popular destinations for ex-Nazis, most notably after the fall of Perón's regime in 1955, which made Argentina a much less hospitable place for them.

At least three dozen Nazi refugees found a new home in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, where active participation in the Holocaust was not always seen as a terrible thing. But there were also individuals who were not prominent Nazi perpetrators who found new lives abroad due to employment opportunities; one example being the Austrian engineer, Walter Hassler, presented in the book as an example of a skilled laborer in demand after the second World War.

During the war, the Nazis had established links with influential Muslim circles, including the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, who actively supported the German crusade against the Jews. After the war, such connections continued. The former Nazi agitator Johann von Leers, for example, was recruited by Nasser to offer his "know-how" for anti-Israel campaigns sponsored by the Arab League.

Although much has been written in the past three or four decades about the escape of senior Nazi personnel from prosecution in postwar Europe, Steinacher's book stands out as the first "total history" of this complex topic.

He uses a wealth of sources — memoirs, secret service papers, the files of the Red Cross and the Pontificia Commissione di Assistenza — in order to substantiate his provocative but ultimately well documented claims. In so doing, he has raised the bar for all future studies on this subject.

ISRAELI ARCHAEOLOGIST MAPS HOLOCAUST DEATH CAMP SOBIBOR

(Continued from page 11)

began at the site in 2001, with several stages before he invited Haimi to join in 2007. He said the mapping of the 200-yard long *Himmelfahrstrasse* opens the door for looking for the actual gas chambers.

"We are nearer the truth," he said. "It tells us where to look for the gas chambers."

Haimi is not allowed to take any of the items out of Poland, but he consults regu-



Yoram Haimi holds a metal identification tag bearing the name of Lea Judith de la Penha, a 6-year-old Jewish girl from Holland who was killed at Sobibor.

larly with Yad Vashem's International Institute for Holocaust Research, which helps him interpret his findings and gives them historical perspective.

Dan Michman, head of the institute, said Haimi's research helps shed light on the "technical aspects" of the Holocaust. It also grants insight, for example, on what people chose to take with them in their final moments.

"His details are exact and that is an important tool against Holocaust denial. It's not memories, it's based on facts. It's hard evidence," he said.

QUEBEC BEEKEEPER ACCUSED OF NAZI WAR CRIMES

Propped up by a shovel that acts as his cane, Vladimir Katriuk patters about his wooded lot in rural Quebec, lovingly caring for his bees and appearing to have few worries other than this season's honey yield.

But a prominent Jewish human-rights organization insists there's much more to the cordial 91-year-old beekeeper — who they allege is one of the world's most wanted Nazi war criminals.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center recently ranked Katriuk No. 4 on its top-10 list of suspected former Nazis, after a new study alleged he was a key participant in a village massacre during the Second World War.

An academic article alleged that, in 1943, a man with his name lay in wait outside a barn that had been set ablaze, operating a stationary machine gun and firing on civilians as they tried to escape. The same article said the man took a watch, bracelet, and gun from the body of a woman found nearby.

Katriuk spoke recently with The Canadian Press at his small farm in Ormstown, just under an hour's drive from Montreal.

He has denied any involvement in war crimes in the past.

"I have nothing to say," Katriuk said of the accusations, after putting down a beekeeper's smoker and replacing a mesh veil with a floppy ball cap.

"When we talk about bees, that's different. When we talk about my own affairs, that's something else. I'm sorry."

Asked how he felt about having his name on the list of worst surviving Nazis, Katriuk paused. He reached into a box and pulled out a piece of a beehive: "You see?" he said. "Here they have started to make the royal cell [for a queen bee]."

The otherwise chatty Ukrainian-Canadian, who moved to Canada in 1951, claimed he wasn't aware his name was added to the Simon Wiesenthal Center's list.

When pressed again about the allegations, he replied: "Let people talk."

A neighbor described Katriuk as a quiet man who keeps to himself in the sparsely populated area, only a few kilometers from the U.S. border.

"He's a quiet guy. I don't think he mixes in the community ever," said the man, who did not want to be named.

The neighbor acknowledged that locals are aware of the allegations about Katriuk,



Vladimir Katriuk gestures at his honeybee farm in Ormstown, Quebec. Katriuk, alleged to be one of the world's most wanted Nazi war criminals, is living a quiet life keeping bees and selling honey in rural Quebec.

which have made many news headlines over the years.

The Federal Court ruled in 1999 that Katriuk lied about his voluntary service for German authorities during the Second World War in order to obtain Canadian citizenship.

The court concluded Katriuk had been a member of a Ukrainian battalion implicated in numerous atrocities in Ukraine — including the deaths of thousands of Jews in Belorussia between 1941 and 1944.

But in 2007 the Canadian government overturned an earlier decision to revoke Katriuk's citizenship, due to a lack of evidence.

Groups that have long been calling on the government to strip Katriuk of his citi-

zenship now hope that fresh details published in a recent journal article will help change Ottawa's mind.

The article alleges Katriuk was directly involved in the March 1943 massacre that "annihilated" the German-occupied village of *Khatyn* in Belorussia, which is now Belarus.

Soldiers allegedly herded villagers into a barn and lit the roof on fire with a torch, according to witness testimony published in

the article titled "The Khatyn Massacre in Belorussia: A Historical Controversy Revisited."

"One witness stated that Volodymyr Katriuk was a particularly active participant in the atrocity: he reportedly lay behind the stationary machine gun, firing rounds on anyone attempting to escape the flames," said the article, authored by Lund University historian Per Anders Rudling.

Rudling, whose research was published in the spring 2012 issue of *Holocaust Genocide Studies*, attributed these details to KGB interrogations released for the first time in 2008.

After these new allegations surfaced, B'nai Brith Canada urged the Canadian

government in a letter to reconsider its position on Katriuk.

David Matas, the organization's senior legal counsel, said Canada's history in dealing with suspected war criminals has been "bleak."

"It was easier after [the Second World War] to get into Canada if you were a Nazi war criminal, than if you were a Jewish refugee," Matas said.

A spokeswoman for Immigration Minister Jason Kenney said the government "remains committed to identifying and removing people involved in war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide from Canada, including revisiting new evidence on previously examined cases."

Efraim Zuroff, co-ordinator of the organization's Nazi war crimes research project, said the most-wanted list also includes another Canadian: Helmut Oberlander, who's ranked at No. 10.

Oberlander's case is also in limbo, the group says.

Zuroff said the biggest problem in bringing suspected Nazis to justice is not finding them or the evidence — but a lack of political will in many countries to see that they're prosecuted.

"What's the chance of a 90-year-old Nazi war criminal committing murder again? Zero," Zuroff said in a phone interview from the Jerusalem area.

"All they have to do is wait it out. People are going to die soon anyway and they'll spare themselves the expense, the embarrassment and the problems — logistically or whatever — of prosecuting one of their own [citizens]."

Katriuk thought his own time was up last fall, when an ulcer burst in his stomach.

"I was almost finished," said Katriuk.

He added that he received five liters of blood during his two-week stay in hospital.

He hinted that one day he might tell his story — but he didn't say when.

"When it's time to talk, I will talk," he said. "Right now is not the time for me to talk."

COURAGE WAS MY ONLY OPTION

(Continued from page 4)

ings at the time. He was numb then; and he remains anaesthetized more than 65 years later.

There are two special stories about Kent's life in the ghetto, each of them a gem in its own right, and they are enhanced by the larger context in which we read them. "Lala's Story" is the title of a chapter about the relationship between a young boy and his dog, a dog who had been his companion in freedom and who was moved across the street into his father's former factory when the Jews were sent to the ghetto. And yet, on her own, Lala followed the family into the ghetto.

The second independent segment caught me by surprise. Several years ago I lectured at the University of Oregon and was approached by a professor of Landscape Architecture. He had taken an interest in the Holocaust and was writing a book on the subject. Smugly, I wondered what landscape architecture had to do with the Holocaust. He explained that he wanted to know if I knew of any gardens that were planted during the Holocaust, especially in ghettos — where food was scarce and resources negligible.

David Marwell has argued that "just because Jews were powerless, that does not mean that they were passive." Growing a garden is an act of defiance, the assertion of courage and dignity even in — especially

in — the most dangerous of times. To grow a garden one had to find land and seeds or cuttings, tend the garden, and protect it from others who would steal the crops. That was no easy task in situations where hunger was pervasive and where many were dying of starvation. More importantly, one had to believe in spring, that one would live to see the harvest — one had to hope, even against one's better judgment.

When I read Kent's book, I found the answer. Roman Kent and his brother grew a garden in *Lodz*; he cultivated it and protected it. I learned time and again that in different ghettos and under the most impossible of circumstances, some Jews tried to grow their food — and succeeded, albeit for just a time. Kent's chapter on the garden is must reading. It will open your eyes to human initiative, to the capacity of some people to resist physical and psychological degradation.

Kent's chapters on Auschwitz are not particularly vivid, especially in contrast to other segments of the book. His ability to repress is evident; so too is the numbness of his experience. What makes these chapters powerful is not the oppression he faced, a suffering that was common to all inmates, but the bond he shared with his brother Leon and the degree to which the Kniker brothers stood with one another and supported each other throughout their ordeal.

Because he was so young when he survived, the story of his arrival and resettlement in the United States is gripping. It portrays in great detail the insensitivity of Jewish organizations and institutions to the needs of the people we now call survivors. In those days they were called refugees, and Kent captures the inability of Americans — Jews and non-Jews alike — to understand the Holocaust and to grasp its significance.

Kent writes about his marriage to a fellow survivor, the promise of love, the glow of children, the blessing of grandchildren, all the elements of life. He movingly describes his love for his brother, with whom he had shared the ordeal of Auschwitz and the anguish of adjustment to life in America. He writes painfully of his brother's illness, which is but a foretaste of what happens when illness afflicts his son Jeffrey after an accident.

Almost one-third of the book is devoted to Kent's philanthropic life, his early activities with the Anti-Defamation League, and his travels on behalf of the Jewish people. Kent is now President of the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, which provides support to those non-Jews who rescued Jews. He is Chairman of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, where, together with the late Benjamin Meed and the current president, Sam Bloch, he helped organize Gather-

ings in Washington, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, giving a public voice and forum to the American survivors.

As treasurer and chief negotiator for the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (the Claims Conference), Kent describes, as no one else can — and no one else has — the efforts of survivors to achieve justice — partial, inadequate and as late as it is — in the last years of their lives.

Few have written in such detail — naming names and describing the politics of this chapter of contemporary Jewish history. Fewer have written with such courage and with so deep a sense of justice. This part of the book will be studied by historians who want to make sense of the belated efforts at restitution and of the internal struggles that pitted Holocaust educational and memorial institutions and projects against impoverished, sick, and starving survivors around the globe.

Courage Was My Only Option is sure to be a controversial book, but such controversy should be welcomed because it un-masks many of those guilty of less than ethical behavior and provides the needed disinfectant of sunshine on negotiations and efforts that, until now, have been shrouded in secrecy.

Michael Berenbaum is a Professor of Jewish Studies and the Director of the Sigi Ziering Institute.

BOOK URGES GERMANS TO QUIZ DYING NAZI GENERATION

(Continued from page 7)

ble, against the civilian population!" He made no mention of German bombing attacks on *Rotterdam* and *Coventry* in 1940.

He was taken prisoner by American forces in *Metz*, France, in October 1944 and didn't see his wife again until March 1946.



Wehrmacht soldiers tearing down a barrier at a border crossing between Germany and Poland on the first day of the war.

Pfeiffer concluded that his grandfather wasn't lying outright in his interviews, but merely doing what millions of Germans had done after the war — engaging in denial, playing down their role to lessen their responsibility.

It led to the convenient myth in the immediate aftermath of the war that the entire nation had been duped by a small clique of criminals who bore sole responsibility for the Holocaust — and that ordinary Germans had themselves been victims.

Germany has long since jettisoned that fallacy. But Pfeiffer admits that his book didn't answer a key question about his loving, kind grandparents who were pillars of his family for decades.

"Why did the humanity of my grandparents not rebel against the mass murders and why didn't my grandfather, even in his interview in 2005, concede guilt or shame or express any sympathy for the victims?"

"MORAL INSANITY"

When asked whether he felt that he shared any of the collective guilt for the Holocaust, Hans Hermann said: "No. That is no guilt collectively. No group is leveling this collective guilt, it's differentiated today, in historical research as well.

RELUCTANT HERO

(Continued from page 6)

done," says Rabbi Sokoloff, who has known Friedman 15 years. "There's an inner drive ... to make a difference." Then, in Europe, now in the States, "he wants to rebuild, to rebuild what was lost in the war," the rabbi says.

Judith Lazar, who at age 3 was among the children he shepherded to safety from *Debrecen* in 1944, was too young to remember Friedman, but she grew up hearing about him from her mother and other Jews who knew him then. "[Her mother] was crazy about him, about how courageous he was."

Lazar, a longtime Lubavitch emissary in Milan whose son is Rabbi Berel Lazar, the chief rabbi of Russia, says she's heard a now-legendary story of how an innocent remark she made on the Hungarian train put the whole group under Friedman's care in danger, and how his quick thinking saved the day.

She was a little girl and she blurted out, "I don't have a Jewish star, but my mother does."

The other passengers looked at the group with suspicion. Obviously, Jews. Was he? "If I were Jewish, I'd have to wear

The individual guilt of people and groups is being researched."

Pfeiffer writes that his grandparents were infected by the same "moral insanity" that afflicted many Germans during and after World War I: "A state of emotional coldness, a lack of self-criticism, and absolute egotism combined with a strong deficit of moral judgment, as well as the support, acceptance, and justification of cruelty when the enemy was affected by it."

Those are damning words. Pfeiffer said his grandparents' generation probably had no choice but to suppress their guilt in order to keep on functioning in the hard postwar years when all their energy was focused on rebuilding their livelihoods. "It was a necessary human reaction," said Pfeiffer.

The *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* — the confrontation with the past — got a much-needed push with the 1968 student protests.

For many, the atonement didn't come fast enough. German author Ralph Giordano referred to the "Second Guilt" in a book he wrote in 1987 — the reluctance to own up to the crimes, and the ability of Nazi perpetrators to prosper in postwar West Germany.

Pfeiffer hopes his book will encourage other children and grandchildren of eyewitnesses to follow suit. "I think conversations like the ones I carried out will bring relatives together rather than drive a wedge between them," he said.

Pfeiffer's original intention had been just to write a family history for personal use. After he interviewed his grandfather, he edited the transcript and presented it to the family at Christmas in 2005.

"NON-VERBAL ADMISSIONS OF GUILT"

But he had noticed omissions in his grandfather's testimony and had asked him to submit to a second, more rigorous interview in summer 2006. Hans Hermann agreed. Unfortunately, Moritz never got the chance to conduct it. Edith died in June that year after a long illness.

a star," like the Jews, Friedman said to the children in a voice loud enough for everyone to hear. Then, in the version of the story passed along to Lazar, putative Gestapo member Friedman added, "I'm taking these little [he used a crude Hungarian term for women, a word that normally would not pass his lips] to a place where they will kill these dirty Jews."

The danger passed.

In Lazar's family alone there are eight children (all of them Lubavitch emissaries) and more than 50 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. "We owe our lives to him," Lazar says. "Who knows how many others" are alive because of Friedman?

Lazar says her children know Friedman's story. "I told them what he did and how courageous he was."

Friedman, who came to the United States in 1948, is an active member of *Adath Yeshurun* in Kew Gardens, usually walking the several blocks to *shul* for Shabbat services Saturday morning.

Often, he says, he will go back in the afternoon if someone in the congregation invites him to a Shabbat meal between *Mincha* and *Maariv*. "I cannot say no," Friedman says.

Overcome by grief, Hans Hermann died six weeks later.

Asked how he thinks his grandfather would have reacted to his book, Pfeiffer said: "I think he would have initially been shocked about the unsparing presentation of his life story and wouldn't exactly have been delighted at my critical comments and conclusions.

"But I think he would have spent a long time examining it and would acknowledge the factual analysis and the fact that I wasn't trying to discredit him or settle any scores."



German prisoners of war being marched through *Aachen*, in October 1944, the same month that Hans Hermann was taken prisoner in *Metz*.

Pfeiffer sees a big difference between what the dying generation is able to articulate and what it is actually feeling. He detected what he called "non-verbal admissions of guilt" in his grandfather's behavior.

After the war, Hans Hermann encouraged his daughter to learn French and hosted French pupils on exchange programs. He also supported the European integration policy of Konrad Adenauer and Charles de Gaulle, and avoided going to veterans' reunions.

In 2005, he was outraged at first by a research report Pfeiffer co-wrote at the University of *Freiburg* about the involvement of the *Wehrmacht* in war crimes. A few weeks later, however, he told his grandson: "I have thought a lot about it — and there's some truth to it."

THE MAN WHO SAVED 900 JEWISH BOYS INSIDE A DEATH CAMP

(Continued from page 6)

them that block 66 had no more.

Thanks to Kalina's efforts, when the Allies liberated *Buchenwald* on April 11, 1945, over 900 Jewish boys survived. When they were freed, the boys lifted up Antonin Kalina and carried him on their shoulders.

After the war, Kalina returned to his home in Czechoslovakia and lived out the remainder of his life in obscurity. His boys began new lives in Israel, the United States, Australia, and Europe; but they always remembered the Czech man who risked his life in order to save theirs. For years, however, Kalina's heroism went unrecognized, partially because Kalina, a humble man, never sought out publicity for his actions. Likewise, for years many of the boys whom he saved didn't talk about their experiences during the Holocaust.

Several years ago, some of the surviving boys, now around 80 years old, along with a historian from Michigan State University, Kenneth Waltzer, initiated a process to have Kalina recognized as Righteous Among the Nations. The impetus for seeking recognition for Kalina was the filming

FRENCH PRESIDENT MARKS ANNIVERSARY OF HOLOCAUST DETENTIONS

French President François Hollande paid tribute at a commemorative ceremony to thousands of Jewish people who were rounded up and detained in a Parisian cycling stadium by the Vichy government 70 years ago.

"We owe it to the Jewish martyrs of the Winter Velodrome to tell the truth about what happened 70 years ago," Hollande said, speaking from the site where the "Vel d'Hiv," or the Winter Velodrome cycling stadium, once stood in Paris' 15th district.

"The truth is that this crime was committed in France, by France," he said. Hollande laid a wreath during the ceremony, and a commemorative plaque was also erected.

In one of the darkest chapters in French history, more than 13,000 Jews were rounded up in their homes on July 16 and 17, 1942, and detained by police on orders of the Vichy government, which was collaborating with the Nazis. The Vichy regime was the French government at the time.

Unmarried Jews and couples without children were detained in *Drancy*, a suburb north of Paris. Families were detained at the Winter Velodrome in Paris for five days in insufferable conditions, with children separated from parents, before they were sent to the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp.

"These women, these men, these children could not have expected the fate which was reserved for them. They could not have even imagined it. They trusted in France," Hollande said.

Hollande also vowed to fight anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial, calling for more efforts to educate younger generations about the Winter Velodrome incident.

"There cannot be a single school where this story is not fully heard, respected, and reflected upon," he said. "For the French Republic, there cannot be — there will not be — memory that is lost. I will see to it personally."

In total, some 76,000 French men, women, and children were deported to Nazi extermination camps during World War II, Hollande said. Only 2,500 came back to France.

of the documentary *Kinderblock 66: Return to Buchenwald*, which tells the story of four boys who go back for the 65th anniversary of their liberation from the camp. The film also tells the story of Kalina and highlights his role in the rescue of the children in the camp. Two of the film's subjects, Naftali Furst of *Haiifa* and Alex Moskovic of Florida, played leading roles in the nomination process.

In July, *Kinderblock 66* played to a full house at the Jerusalem Film Festival. Following the screening, Irena Steinfeldt, the Director of Yad Vashem's Righteous Among the Nations Department, stood before the rapt audience and announced that Yad Vashem had granted Kalina the recognition he so richly deserved. For the survivors and their descendants, it was a bittersweet moment — a long-standing oversight had been corrected, but there are no surviving members of Kalina's family to accept his honor.

Today, as we remember heroes like Raoul Wallenberg and Antonin Kalina, we must consider other unsung heroes of the Holocaust for whom there may be no one left to tell their story.

PREGNANT IN AUSCHWITZ

BY JOE O'CONNOR, NATIONAL POST

Miriam Rosenthal was four months pregnant, starving, bone-tired, cold, filthy, and afraid when an SS officer in big black boots and a crisp uniform appeared before the barracks in Auschwitz with a loudspeaker in hand.

All pregnant women line up, he barked. Line up, line up — your food portions are being doubled.

"Can you imagine?" Miriam asks. "Even women who were not pregnant stepped forward. I was standing with my younger cousin, but I wouldn't go. She says, 'Miriam, what are you doing?'"

"Something was holding me back. Someone was watching over me. I feel maybe my mother, maybe God. Two hundred women stepped forward and 200 women went to the gas chamber. And I don't know why I didn't step forward.

"I have asked rabbis. I have asked some big people and no one can give me an answer. If you believe in God, then God did it. If you believe it was my parents, then it was my parents, which is what I believe.

"They were such good people, generous, kind. And maybe for their sake, maybe that's why I didn't step forward. I have asked myself this question so many times as I lay in bed upstairs."

We are sitting in the dining room of a tidy home in north Toronto. Tears are welling in Miriam Rosenthal's eyes. Talking about those long-ago days "rips at her guts." She remembers everything. "Every step." Every horror. Her body is shot through with arthritis, her legs barely work, her neck aches, she is 90, but Miriam remembers.

"I don't have dementia yet," she says, smiling.

Not stepping forward at Auschwitz was a beginning, not an end. There were other mysteries of fate that, in the dying months of the Second World War in the deadened landscape of Nazi Germany, brought seven pregnant Jewish women together in *Kaufering I*, a sub-camp of *Dachau*, where seven Jewish babies would be born.

The Germans murdered over a million Jewish children. Like the sick and the old, they were viewed as useless mouths to feed and often among the first killed. Some were used in medical experiments, but newborns were typically murdered at birth.

Almost seven decades after the war, the seven Jewish babies of *Kaufering* — three boys, four girls — are still alive, scattered about the globe, the youngest living survivors of the Holocaust.

"Here is my miracle baby now," Miriam says, pausing mid-sentence, grinning at the appearance of her 67-year-old "baby," Leslie.

"And here is my miracle mother," Leslie Rosenthal chimes back.

Miriam Rosenthal was born Miriam Schwarcz in *Komarno*, Czechoslovakia, on August 26, 1922, the youngest of 13 children. Jacob, her father, was a gentleman farmer.

"I was spoiled," she says. "I had a beautiful life. I was always asking my mother when is it my turn to get married?"

A matchmaker from *Miskolc*, Hungary, met with Miriam and her mother, Laura. Flipping through the woman's book of eligible bachelors, Miriam spotted her "Clark Gable," a movie-star-handsome cattle broker's son named Bela Rosenthal. They were married in Budapest on April 5, 1944. Miriam pinned a red rose on her lapel to cover the yellow Star of David.

The honeymoon was brief. Within a few short months, Bela was sent to a slave labor camp, Miriam to Auschwitz. She was later transferred to *Augsberg*, Germany, to work in a Messerschmitt factory. All the while, her belly grew.

Two men from the SS appeared at the factory one day, with snarling German shepherds, demanding to know who the pregnant women were. They asked a second time.

"I had to raise my hand," Miriam says. "I was showing, and if I didn't put up my hand all those other women would be killed. How could I not put up my hand? The girls



A postwar photo of Miriam Rosenthal.

wept for me. The SS took me and put me on a passenger train, which was very unusual. There was a woman, a civilian, and she said: 'Frau, what is with you? You don't have hair. The clothes you are wearing. What are you, from a mental hospital?'"

"She didn't have a dream, this German woman, of all the horrible things the Germans were doing. I told her I am not from a mental hospital, I am going to Auschwitz — I am going to the gas. She looked at me like I was crazy, opened her purse and gave me some bread. I ate it so fast. I was so hungry."

The SS guards had been out smoking and returned, telling Miriam she was one "lucky Jew," that the crematoriums at Auschwitz were "kaput." Instead, she was taken to *Kaufering I*, a satellite camp near *Dachau*, hand-delivered to the gates and identified by a number tattooed on her left forearm, still visible today.

"They said, 'Adieu, Frau, good luck to you.' Can you imagine?" Miriam says. "I

went into this camp and I was led to a basement and guess who was there?"

Six other pregnant women: crying, laughing, holding one another, chattering in Hungarian, bundling themselves in the hope that they might actually survive. One by one the babies came, delivered by another inmate, a Hungarian gynecologist whose only instrument was a pail of hot water.

A *capo*, a Jewish woman charged with overseeing the women, smuggled a stove into the room, keeping the expectant mothers warm during the freezing winter months of 1945. The Germans discovered the stove and beat the *capo* bloody, ripping into her flesh with their truncheons.

"I have looked for this woman since," Miriam says. "After the beating she told us, 'Don't you worry, girls, the stove will be back tomorrow.'"

It was.

Leslie Rosenthal was the last of the *Kaufering* babies, born February 28, 1945.

"He was beautiful, blond hair, blue eyes," Miriam says. "An SS came in and was surprised and said he looks Aryan and he asked me if the father was an SS man.

"I told him no, the father was my husband."

American troops wept when they liberated *Dachau* in late April and discovered the babies — new life in a graveyard of bones. Miriam said goodbye to her "camp sisters" and headed home to Czechoslovakia. Bela had also survived and returned to *Komarno*, broken sandals on his feet, held there by a string.

"I could see him coming, running from afar, and I shouted, 'Bela, Bela.' I wasn't sure it was him, and he was running and calling my name," Miriam says.

"I can't describe that feeling of when he saw our baby, when he saw Leslie for the first time. We cried and cried and cried."

The young family moved to Canada in 1947. Bela found work in a mattress factory, but his real gift was talking. He was a man of words, and faith. The Rosenthals left the big city for Timmins and Sudbury, where Bela served as rabbi before their return to Toronto in 1956. They ran Miriam's Fine Judaica, a gift shop, on Bathurst Street, for over four decades, raised three children, and had grandchildren — and great-grandchildren. Bela died a few years back. He was 97.

Life in Canada wasn't always easy, Miriam says. There were up and downs and there was always the past, painful memories haunting the periphery, dark shadows amid the light.

Miriam has a recurring nightmare where the SS come and take Leslie away. But when she looks over at him now, sitting beside her on a warm August afternoon, her face brightens, because she knows how her war story ends.

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