

MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE



Vol. 43-No. 5

ISSN 0892-1571

May/June 2017-Iyyar/Sivan 5777

WE WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP THE FLAME OF REMEMBRANCE SHINING BRIGHT

ANNUAL BENEFIT GALA IN LOS ANGELES

There wasn't an empty seat or a dry eye in the Beverly Wilshire Hotel Ballroom as the American Society for Yad Vashem — Western Region and the Jewish Life Foundation hosted their annual benefit gala on June 14, 2017. The evening honored the late Edita and Abraham Spiegel family, represented by daughter Rita Spiegel; the feature film *Denial*; and world-renowned musician, singer and famed KISS co-founder Gene Simmons and his mother, Holocaust survivor Flora Klein.

Karen Sandler served as the gala chair and introduced Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev, who began the program with a powerful message welcoming the guests and recognizing the evening's honorees. Lenny Wilf, chairman of ASYV, enumerated several of the important areas of Yad Vashem's efforts, including the ongoing work of the Holocaust History Museum, and the International School for Holocaust Studies, which educates tens of thousands of scholars and educators throughout the world in how to teach the Holocaust to future generations. Lenny recognized the ongoing support of the Hollywood community, which "has for many years been an essential partner; starting in 1945, the year that marked the end of World War II and the liberation of the concentration camps, films and docu-

mentaries dealing with the incomprehensible reality that was the Holocaust were being produced." Wilf announced an eight-day international, multigenerational mission to Vienna and Israel in July, 2018 marking Israel's 70th anniversary year, and invited all to participate.

Consul General of Israel for Los Angeles Sam Grundwerg also noted the contributions of the enter-

tainment community, stating, "We salute Hollywood to show appreciation for those who use their God-given talents and voice to insure that the stories, lessons and truths of the Holocaust will never be forgotten...will never be twisted, distorted or denied. In this room tonight, we bridge a powerful nexus of Hollywood and legacy."

Bill Bernstein, Western Region director of institutional advancement of ASYV, recognized the 40 Holocaust survivors that were in attendance and introduced Max Webb, the oldest Holocaust survivor in Los Angeles, who recently celebrated his 100th

commitment that these heroes have shown in becoming vital parts of their communities.

As the number of Holocaust survivors continues to diminish every day, the importance of keeping the memories alive plays a crucial role in educating future generations about the Holocaust. Shaya Ben Yehuda, Yad Vashem's managing director of the International Relations Division, reinforced this concept in his poignant remarks, when he stated, "We will continue to keep the flame of remembrance shining bright."

Following video messages from Harvard Law Professor Emeritus Alan Dershowitz and from Deborah Lipstadt, author of the book *History on Trial: My Day in Court with a Holocaust Denier*, on which the feature film *Denial* was based, Jonathan King, executive vice-president of Participant Media, presented the Vanguard Award to *Denial* producer Gary Foster. "We have been overwhelmed by the response to the film," said Foster. "Deborah's story has moved people to tears and emboldened them to speak out. We live in a world where facts mean nothing and false narratives are everywhere. So how do we differentiate between truth and lies?" He continued, "That is why we need places like Yad Vashem. It gives us our best chance to make an impact on future generations."

"It would've been enough to tell Deborah's story, but to have a film that elevates an issue that is so much in the news and on our minds these days made it even better," Foster said. "There is a difference between truth, lies and opinion. There is a difference."

Ron Meier, ASYV executive director, paid tribute to the Spiegel family, heralding their building of the Children's Memorial at Yad Vashem as Edita and Abraham's "crowning achievement." He went on to say, "What they built changed the

(Continued on page 16)



Lenny Wilf, chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem; Gene Simmons, recipient of Legacy Award; Rita Spiegel, recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award; Gary Foster, recipient of the Vanguard Award; Ron Meier, executive director of the ASYV.

birthday. Bernstein stated, "For me, at this challenging time in world history, Yad Vashem takes on a very special meaning and responsibility. It is through the lessons learned from the Holocaust that we must remain vigilant in reminding the world that it is incumbent on us...that without concerted effort from every corner of this earth, this terrible human tragedy will continue to rear its ugly head."

Phil Blazer, founder and president of JLTV, introduced his long-time friend and a Holocaust survivor, Jack Nagel, who recited the *HaMotzi* blessing. Blazer, celebrating over five decades in media, reflected on the powerful platform that JLTV has provided in telling the stories of Holocaust survivors and the deep

IN THIS ISSUE

ASYV and Jewish Life Foundation Annual Benefit Gala.....	1, 8,16
The unbelievable heroic story of Ireland's "Oskar Schindler".....	2
The Holocaust: Who are the missing million?.....	3
Roses in a Forbidden Garden.....	4
Japan and the Jews.....	5
The clear and present danger facing Sweden's Jews.....	6
ASYV Annual Spring Luncheon.....	9
The Mufti and the Holocaust, revisited.....	12
for children of survivors, the trauma's in the genes.....	14
He remarkably escaped the Holocaust.....	15

THE UNBELIEVABLE HEROIC STORY OF IRELAND'S OVERLOOKED "OSKAR SCHINDLER"

BY MICHAEL RIORDAN,
THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

As the Gestapo surrounds the palace of an Italian anti-Fascist aristocrat, an Irish priest dashes to the cellar. He is wanted by the Nazis for his role in the daring rescues of Jews, POWs and refugees, but this time it seems there is no escape. Miraculously, a coal delivery being made to the palace offers the perfect cover — the cleric blackens his face, hides his cassock and slips away to freedom through the narrow cobbled streets of Rome.

This dramatic scene, recreated in the 1983 movie *The Scarlet and the Black* starring Gregory Peck as Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty, was just one of a number of close shaves for the doughty Irish priest and Vatican diplomat during his heroic campaign to thwart the Gestapo in the Eternal City during World War II.

"Monsignor O'Flaherty left the safety of the Vatican to run his escape line," said Jerry O'Grady, chairman of the Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty Memorial Society in the priest's hometown in *Killarney*, Ireland. "The Gestapo had a price on his head and they tried to kidnap him many times."

The Society is now preparing an

application to Yad Vashem to have its local hero, who is credited with concealing hundreds of Jews from the Gestapo, listed as Righteous Among the Nations.

O'Flaherty grew up the son of a golf steward in *Killarney*, Ireland, and his skill at the game helped ease his way



Lieutenant General John C.H. Lee presenting the US Medal of Freedom to Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty.

into Roman society. The priest played with social luminaries such as Mussolini's son-in-law Count Galeazzo Ciano, as well as the former Spanish King Alfonso. All his connections were to become very useful when he took on the unforeseen mantle of rescuer.

In the last years of the war, as the

Italian government collapsed O'Flaherty organized a group of priests, anti-Fascists and diplomats to help shelter Jews, escaped POWs and refugees. He set up a network of safe havens in rented apartments and religious houses throughout Rome.

Claudio-Ilan Jacobi, now living in Israel, is one of the Jews O'Flaherty saved. He was away from the ghetto when the Gestapo raided it.

"I saw the Monsignor many times," Jacobi wrote in his statement for Yad Vashem. "He helped my mother, my grandparents and me find refuge from the Nazis."

"He got false papers for us from the Vatican as well as food cards," Jacobi said. "I remember the great appreciation my mother had for all he did."

On one occasion O'Flaherty even threatened the doorman of Jacobi's apartment with excommunication for speaking too freely about the Jewish family hiding inside.

"The test for recognition by Yad Vashem is very rigorous," said O'Grady, "so we are continuing to try to trace Jewish survivors or their fam-

ilies from the city."

As the Nazis began transporting Roman Jews to the camps, O'Flaherty walked Ines Ghiron and her friends through the Gestapo-filled streets relying on false Vatican papers for safe passage. Ghiron wrote in her memoirs that they all arrived safely at a convent in *Monteverde* run by Canadian nuns.

After the Gestapo became aware of O'Flaherty's activities, it painted a white line across St. Peter's Square, dividing the neutral Vatican from Fascist-controlled Rome. Guards were placed nearby ready to snatch the monsignor if he ever crossed. As a result, O'Flaherty became known locally as the Scarlet Pimpernel because of the many disguises he donned during his forays into the capital.

The modest monsignor only came to public attention in the 1960s when books about his exploits were published.

Holocaust survivor Tomi Reichental, who was the keynote speaker at the 2013 presentation of the annual humanitarian award named in honor of O'Flaherty, told *The Times of Israel* that "If he saved one Jew it's as if he saved thousands."

O'Flaherty died in 1963 — just as his exploits were becoming the stuff of legend.

NEW WHITEWASH OF FDR'S FAILURE TO BOMB AUSCHWITZ

BY RAFAEL MEDOFF,
THE JERUSALEM POST

If only Alonzo Hamby had met George McGovern!

Hamby is the author of a new biography of president Franklin D. Roosevelt which defends FDR's failure to bomb Auschwitz, on the grounds that it was too far away for US planes to reach. McGovern, the US senator and 1972 Democratic presidential nominee, was one of the World War II pilots who actually bombed oil sites at Auschwitz — proving that it was, in fact, not out of reach at all.

Hamby is a prominent historian and the author of a biography of Harry S. Truman as well as several other well-received books.

Reviewers are already heaping praise on his new FDR biography, as well. Evidently they are unaware of the colossal error he makes in his account of Roosevelt's response to the Holocaust.

"The death camps were located in areas largely beyond the reach of American military power," Hamby writes in *Man of Destiny: FDR and the Making of the American Century*. And: "Auschwitz was in a Soviet area of operations and at the outer limit of American bomber range."

And yet, American bombers did repeatedly bomb German oil factories

that were situated in the slave labor sections of Auschwitz.

On August 7, 1944, US bombers attacked the *Trzebinia* oil refineries, just 21 km. from the gas chambers. On August 20, a squadron of 127 US bombers, accompanied by the all-African American unit known as the Tuskegee Airmen, struck oil factories less than 8 km. from the gas chambers.

A teenage slave laborer named Elie Wiesel witnessed the August 20 raid. A glance at Wiesel's best-selling book *Night* would have enlightened Hamby. Wiesel wrote: "If a bomb had fallen on the blocks [the prisoners' barracks], it alone would have claimed hundreds of victims on the spot. But we were no longer afraid of death; at any rate, not of that death. Every bomb that exploded filled us with joy and gave us new confidence in life. The raid lasted over an hour. If it could only have lasted ten times ten hours!"

There were additional Allied bombings of the Auschwitz oil factories throughout the autumn. Allied bombers also flew close to Auschwitz in 1944 to resupply the Polish Home Army forces that were fighting the Germans in Warsaw. On August 8, British planes began air-dropping supplies to the Poles. Their flight route took them within a few kilometers of Auschwitz. They would fly that route 22 times during the two weeks to follow. In September, President Roosevelt ordered US planes to take

part in the Warsaw airlift.

When George McGovern first mentioned publicly, in 2004, that he had been one of the pilots who bombed the Auschwitz area in 1944, interviewers from the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies flew to South Dakota to videotape his recollections.

McGovern described to them how, at age 22, he piloted one of the B-24 "Liberator" bombers that targeted the oil factories at Auschwitz.

"There is no question we should have attempted... to go after Auschwitz," McGovern said. "There was a pretty good chance we could have blasted those rail lines off the face of the earth, which would have interrupted the flow of people to those death chambers, and we had a pretty good chance of knocking out those gas ovens."

Even if there was a danger of accidentally harming some of the prisoners, "it was certainly worth the effort, despite all the risks," McGovern said, because the prisoners were already "doomed to death" and an Allied bombing attack might have slowed down the mass murder process, thus saving many more lives.

McGovern noted that he remained an ardent admirer of President Roosevelt.

"Franklin Roosevelt was a great man and he was my political hero," he said in the interview. "But I think he made two great mistakes in World

War II." One was the internment of Japanese Americans; the other was the decision "not to go after Auschwitz.... God forgive us for that tragic miscalculation."

It's a shame Hamby never met McGovern — he would have disabused Hamby of the absurd notion that Auschwitz was out of America's reach.

But then again, McGovern's statements about bombing Auschwitz have been widely available on the Internet for more than a decade now. Hamby could have located them with even the most cursory search of the literature on the subject. Thus one suspects that even if Hamby had known of McGovern's experiences he would have looked for some other way to exonerate the Roosevelt administration for its refusal to bomb Auschwitz.

But FDR and his administration do not deserve to be exonerated. Dropping a few bombs on Auschwitz or the railway lines leading to it would not have undermined the war effort; it simply would have conflicted with Roosevelt's view that the war against the Jews was a sideshow which was not America's concern. The president who presented himself to the public as the champion of the "forgotten man," as someone who embodied humane values and cared about the downtrodden, turned his back on the most compelling moral challenge of our times.

THE HOLOCAUST: WHO ARE THE MISSING MILLION?

BY RAFFI BERG, BBC NEWS

Giselle Cycowicz (born Friedman) remembers her father, Wolf, as a warm, kind and religious man. “He was a scholar,” she says, “he always had a book open, studying Talmud, but he was also a businessman and he looked after his family.”

Before the war, the Friedmans lived a happy, comfortable life in *Khust*, a Czechoslovak town with a large Jewish population on the fringes of Hungary. All that changed after 1939, when pro-Nazi Hungarian troops, and later Nazi Germany, invaded, and all the town’s Jews were deported to Auschwitz.

Giselle last saw her father, “strong and healthy,” hours after the family arrived at the *Birkenau* section of the death camp. Wolf had been selected for a workforce, but a fellow prisoner under orders would not let her go to him.

“That would have been my chance to maybe kiss him the last time,”

“Every new name we can add to our database is a victory against the Nazis, against the intent of the Nazis to wipe out the Jewish people. Every new name is a small victory against oblivion.”

The institution, a sprawling complex of buildings, trees and gardens on the western slopes of Mount Herzl, gathers details about the victims in two ways: through information from those with knowledge of the deceased, and from archive sources, ranging from Nazi deportation lists to Jewish school yearbooks.

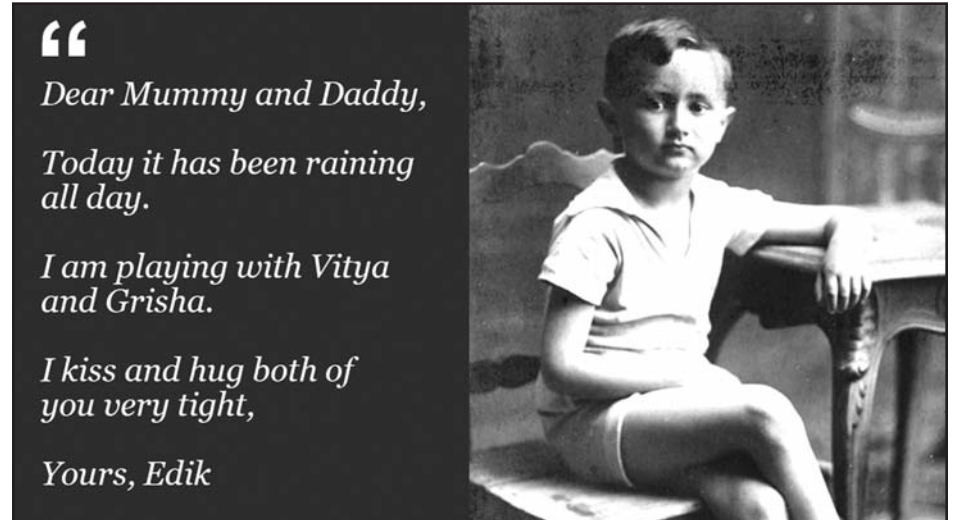
Today Giselle has come to dedicate her father’s name, nearly 73 years after he was killed, a small piece in a vast jigsaw.

She is helped by trained staff through the process of recording Wolf’s details on a Page of Testimony, a one-page form for documenting biographical information about the deceased, such as where they lived before the war, their occupation and the members of their family, and, if available, a photograph.

This is apparent in the decreasing number of Pages of Testimony it receives — down from at least 2,000

about 4.5 million Jews were murdered.

This is because while there was an



Edik Tonkonogi from *Satanov* in Ukraine was murdered after the Nazis entered the town in 1941.

per month five years ago to about 1,600 per month currently.

The memorial is trying to raise awareness, including among Holocaust survivors who have not yet come forward. For decades, for many of them, the experience was still too painful to talk about.

“It’s quite a common occurrence, not only in Holocaust survivors but survivors of prolonged and extreme trauma in childhood,” says Dr. Martin Auerbach, Clinical Director at AMCHA, a support service in Jerusalem for Holocaust survivors.

That began to change, he says, after about 30 or 40 years, when many survivors started talking about what happened, not with their children but with their inquisitive grandchildren. Dr. Auerbach sees the Names Recovery Project as a valuable part of the healing process.

“Filling out this page of information saying this was my father, mother, grandfather, nephews and nieces — you cannot bury your relatives who perished, but you can remember them in a way that will commemorate them forever, so this is very important and also therapeutic for many survivors.”

organized, official process of arrest and deportation further west, in the east whole communities were marched off and massacred without any such formalities.

An estimated 1.5 million Jews alone were shot to death by the *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing squads) in what has become known as the Holocaust by Bullets, after Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941.

In *Babi Yar*, in Ukraine, for instance, of the 33,000 Jews from Kiev and its surroundings who were slaughtered in a ravine in September 1941 in the largest massacre of its kind, about half are yet to be identified.

Others not murdered by the *Einsatzgruppen* died, without a trace, from starvation or exhaustion in ghettos and labor camps, or were killed in nearby extermination camps, where they had been herded without any kind of processing.

Yad Vashem is working with Jewish organizations in those countries to try to reach remaining survivors in the former Soviet Union, where the Holocaust was not officially commemorated, who may have little awareness of the memorial’s exist-



Two-thirds of European Jewry was murdered by the Nazis.

Giselle, now 89, says, her voice cracking with emotion.

Giselle, her mother and a sister survived, somehow, five months in “the hell” of Auschwitz. She later learned that in October 1944 “a skeletal man” had passed by the women’s camp and relayed a message to anyone alive in there from *Khust*.

“Tell them just now 200 men were brought back from the coal mine. Tell them that tomorrow we won’t be here anymore.” The man was Wolf Friedman. He was gassed the next day.

Six million Jews were murdered by the Nazis and their accomplices during World War II. In many cases entire towns’ Jewish populations were wiped out, with no survivors to bear witness — part of the Nazis’ plan for the total annihilation of European Jewry.

Since 1954, Israel’s Holocaust memorial, Yad Vashem, has been working to recover the names of all the victims, and to date has managed to identify some 4.7 million.

“Every name is very important to us,” says Dr. Alexander Avram, director of Yad Vashem’s Hall of Names and the Central Database of Shoah [Holocaust] Victims’ Names.

“Only two-thirds of the way down do we ask where they were during the war and what happened to them,” Cynthia Wroclawski, deputy director of Yad Vashem’s Archives Division, points out.

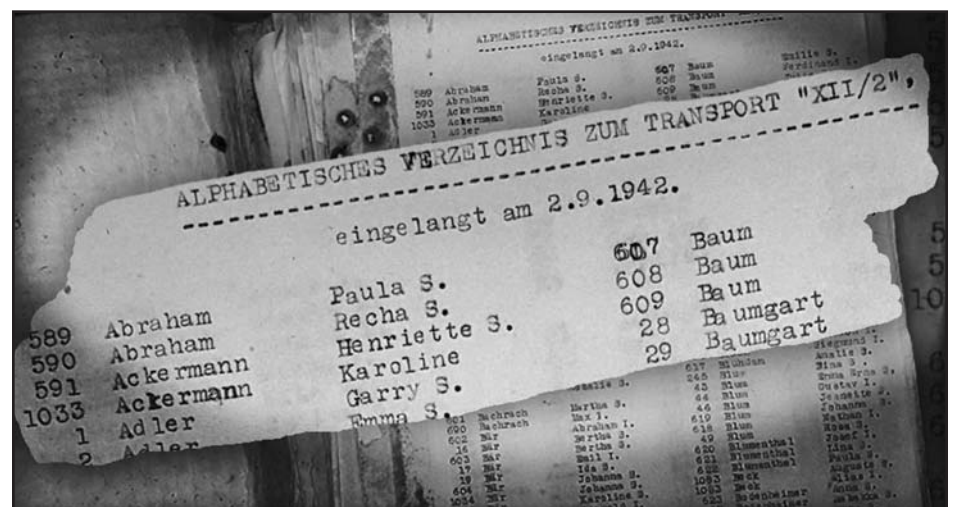
“We’re interested in seeing a person as a person and who they were before they became a victim.”

It is, the institution says, a kind of paper tombstone. So far Yad Vashem has collected 2.7 million Pages of Testimony.

They are stored in black boxes, each containing 300 pages — 9,000 boxes in all. They are kept in climate-controlled conditions on shelves surrounding a central installation, a 30-foot-high conical structure lined with the faces of men, women and children who were murdered, rising up towards the sky.

Here in the Hall of Names, groups of visitors pass through in quiet contemplation. There is space on the shelves for 11,000 more boxes — or six million names in all.

With the last survivors dying out, Yad Vashem is facing a race against time to prevent more than a million unidentified victims disappearing without a trace.



In Western Europe, the Nazis kept records of victims, such as this *Frankfurt to Theresienstadt* deportation list.

While Yad Vashem has made great strides in identifying victims from Western and Central Europe — about 95% have now been named — far fewer names have been uncovered in Nazi-occupied areas of Eastern Europe, where

tence. It is a massive and often complex task. The memorial holds some 205 million Holocaust-related documents, which are examined meticulously in the search for names.

(Continued on page 7)

A MOTHER'S DIARY: SURVIVING THE HOLOCAUST IN UKRAINE, 1941–1944

A Mother's Diary: Surviving the Holocaust in Ukraine, 1941–1944.

By Sosia Gottesfeld Zimmerman. Bookstand Publishing: Morgan Hill CA, 2015. 180 pp. \$18.95 softcover.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

"The Ukrainians were more than willing to carry out the extermination. They enjoyed watching the Jews being killed in the streets and fields, robbing them of their possessions and clothes after death, and their unquenched thirst for Jewish blood never ceased. The Ukrainian intellectuals and clergy urged Hitler to accelerate the 'final solution.' If at all possible, their enthusiasm for killing Jews and orgy of blood might have surpassed that of their masters."

From the Forward by Daniel Zimmerman and Vivian Zimmerman Furman-Rubin to A Mother's Diary: Surviving the Holocaust in Ukraine, 1941–1944

Outside of Holocaust survivors, few people know of the eager collaborators Hitler and the Nazis found to murder Jews as they made their determined, relentless, and bloody path through Eastern Europe. It's way past time they were more fully "recognized"! There were the Lithuanians. There were the Latvians. There were the Estonians. There were the Ukrainians. It's very difficult to figure out which group was worst! Unfortunately, they all tie for that infamous position!

In the slim, absorbing volume by Sosia Gottesfeld Zimmerman entitled, *A Mother's Diary: Surviving the Holocaust in Ukraine, 1941–1944*, we read the heart-wrenching and heart-stopping tale of surviving not just the Nazis, but their "conscientious" and loyal helpers, the Ukrainians. Thus, set in *Skala*, a typical *shtetl* in eastern Poland (Galicia), the *Diary* clearly and interestingly reveals with what obvious jubilation the Ukrainians awaited their supposed "liberators," the Nazis, from their overlords, the Soviets. It reveals with what appetite the Ukrainians awaited the moment they could pounce on all that the Jews in their midst possessed, making it their own. At the same time we follow the story of

Sosia and her immediate family — a husband and son — in their desperate efforts to survive the evil of their Ukrainian neighbors and the Nazis, who couldn't have been happier with the more-than-willing accomplices they discovered.

Needless to say, just as they did everywhere, when the Nazis came to *Skala* in July 1941, they immediately began their destruction of the lives of the 1,550 Jews who lived there. Jewish homes were ransacked. Jews were attacked and murdered on the

streets. Jews were soon ordered to live in a ghetto. A *Judenrat* was established to fulfill Nazi orders vis-à-vis the Jews of *Skala*. At the start, these orders dealt with supplying the Nazis with workers for their labor camps. "The only purpose of this work was to exhaust the workers." Indeed, "it was

impossible to survive in the camps for long," as laborers worked hours without end, continually beaten by Nazi and Ukrainian guards.

Then in September 1942, hundreds of Jews from *Skala* were put on trains for extermination . . . at *Belzec*. Assisting in this, too, were the Ukrainians — who knew, better than the Nazis, just who the Jews were, and where, if they took

flight from the ghetto, they could be hiding. For that matter, at times the Ukrainians, having organized themselves into militias, rounded up Jews on their own and presented them to the Gestapo! During these ruthless captures, Ukrainians also stole as much Jewish property as possible — even returning with wagons to collect piles of more Jewish possessions they couldn't initially carry away. In fact, the *Diary* plainly proclaims that it was "like a holiday for them."



How Sosia and her little family lived through all of this is nothing less than a miracle. Sosia credits her husband, Zysio Zimmerman. He was always somehow able to find that unique Ukrainian farmer who — for payment of money or gifts — would take the family in for a short while. She also credits one particular Ukrainian farmer who — despite the shrewish anti-Semitism of his wife, forever threatening to throw them out — kept the family for a total of fourteen months. In return this farmer took everything the family had. Still, it must be remembered, some Ukrainian farmers took everything Jews had, supposedly as payment for hiding them . . . and then betrayed them to the Nazis!

Finally, the *Diary* made this reviewer think of her own family and their survival among the Lithuanians. Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, one of the few, if not the only rabbi to survive the *Kovno* ghetto to be liberated by the Russians, once told her that for the Jews of Lithuania, the Lithuanians were their *umglik* (disaster). They, like the Ukrainians, knew just who the Jews were, where they could be hiding, and took pleasure in identifying them for the Nazis. It appears that for the Jews in *Skala* and the accompanying region, the *umglik* was the Ukrainians!

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

ROSES IN A FORBIDDEN GARDEN

Roses in a Forbidden Garden: A Holocaust Love Story.

By Elise Garibaldi. Decalogue Books: New York, 2016. 236 pp. \$19.95 paperback.

REVIEWED BY ART SHOSTAK

Desperate to improve his family's chances to avoid Holocaust martyrdom, Carl Katz, a former successful businessman, agreed to help administer a major dorm facility in *Theresienstadt*, a Nazi transit camp. His dual role — vulnerable captive and yet also camp administrator — was held in various forms by comparable victims in hundreds of other Nazi camps. Like Carl, many such men and women, to their everlasting credit, became secret resisters.

Inge Katz, Carl's young daughter, had a tender romance while imprisoned in *Theresienstadt*, proving that life there, at least for some, although incredibly difficult and precariously uncertain, was not devoid of positive human experiences. Many decades after captivity, Inge's account of the entire experience details how resolute prisoners like Carl and his daughter effectively resisted dehumanization.

We also learn about valiant efforts Inge's fiancé, Schmuel Berger, made to survive his own horror story. Sent by train with other young men to the Auschwitz death camp, he was spared on arrival for slave labor and not sent to a gas chamber. Later he was transferred to the *Dachau* concentration camp. When it was evacuated by Nazi collaborators, he escaped from a derailed train strafed by several low-flying Allied aircraft. He sought aid thereafter from German citizens by pretending to be a laborer who had come from the east to work. Before his liberation by American forces, Schmuel drew strength from unswerving faith in God's protection and his heartfelt desire to be reunited with Inge.

Throughout the book attention is paid to little-known forbidden efforts

certain Jewish prisoners dared to make to aid others, in defiance of unforgettable and unforgivable evil. Identified now as acts of stealth altruism, these prohibited behaviors

involved bravery, compassion, empathy, morality and sacrifice. In bringing stealth altruism in from the shadows, *Roses in a Forbidden Garden* adds to the conventional horror story an overdue redemptive and inspiring help story. Its combination of horror and help offers a welcome contrast to a predominantly woeful Holocaust narrative.

Finally, this enlightening and uplifting biography is distinctive in that its author, Elise Garibaldi, is an American-born family member. One hopes far more relatives of aging survivors, especially creative and energetic grandchildren, will soon adapt her example and provide their own engag-

ing accounts of ways other Jewish victims — much like Carl, Inge and Schmuel — refused to be victimized.

The holding camp that held the Katz family was best known for its extraordinary cultural life, one complete with a secret "university," many musical organizations, a teenage-produced magazine, and even hidden late-night cabarets where humor offered invaluable comfort and distraction. Tragically, it was also an overcrowded, disease-ridden, high-anxiety site from which only about 17,100 of nearly 141,000 Jews held at one time or another survived to liberation. About 33,500 prisoners died in the camp itself from disease, and exposure to the elements, filth, malnutrition, overcrowding, overwork, plagues, starvation, torture, and so on. Almost 90,000 were sent by train to gas chambers elsewhere.

Carl was asked by the Council of Jewish Elders (aka *Judenrat*), a governing body beholden to the SS, to administer a very large dormitory that housed the frail elderly, the camp's insane inmates, and a large cooking site. In return, he would receive

(Continued on page 11)



HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS IN POLAND FIND RESTITUTION CLAIMS “LIKE A CAROUSEL”

BY NINA SIEGAL,
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Hania Rosenberg was born in 1934 in *Oswiecim*, an industrial town in the Galicia region of southern Poland. The concentration and extermination camp the Germans built there after their 1939 invasion, called Auschwitz-Birkenau, would take the lives of 1.1 million people.

“No one was poor, no one was rich: We were all about average, like any small town,” Ms. Rosenberg, 82, recalled. “I remember our backyard, with dogs, hens and geese, where we had a cow, which my father bought when I was born because he said you should have your own milk. It was a happy childhood.”

Her father imported and exported straw, hay and coal. He died in the camps, along with most of the town’s Jewish community. Ms. Rosenberg and her mother survived the war — she hid with a gentile family, and her mother endured forced labor at a munitions plant. They later made their way to Sweden.

Her grandparents had a three-story house and a general store, farmland and two garden plots in the nearby town of *Ledziny*. During the Communist era, the house and store were expropriated. A shopping mall and new houses stand on what was once farmland. But two garden plots

— still in the name of her grandfather — remain, and Ms. Rosenberg is fighting for their ownership, so that she can give them to the family who saved her.

“In Poland, there was no official process for this: You have to go to the courts,” she said in a phone interview



Hania Rosenberg, who now lives in Stockholm, Sweden, survived the Holocaust and is now trying to get back the properties that her family had in Poland.

from Stockholm. “We did go to the courts, but it was like a carousel: You go around and around and around and around. You have to produce the documents that they need, and then it’s not enough. There are always more documents you need to provide.”

Poland is the only European Union nation that has not established formal procedures to resolve claims made by

people whose property was seized during the Holocaust, according to a new report by the European Shoah Legacy Institute, based in Prague.

The report, more than 1,200 pages, was based on three years of research in 47 countries that endorsed a 2009 pledge, known as

the Terezin Declaration, to establish a restitution process for “immovable property” like land, homes and businesses.

It found that Poland had only partly complied with an obligation to return communal Jewish property like synagogues and cemeteries.

The issue of restitution is especially fraught for Poland, which had Europe’s largest Jewish community

before the war. About three million Polish Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, along with at least 1.9 million other Polish civilians.

The report says that Holocaust victims across Europe — not only Jews, but also Roma, gays, disabled people and others — “had to navigate a frequently unclear path to recover their property from governments and neighbors who had failed to protect them, and often, who had been complicit in their persecution.”

It added, “Law was not the survivors’ ally; more often it was their enemy, providing impunity for thieves and those who held stolen property.”

In Poland, the injustice was compounded because “comprehensive private property restitution legislation in the post-Communist era” was never enacted, according to the report.

Although the issue is longstanding, it has been complicated by the rise to power in 2015 of the right-wing Law and Justice Party. Party officials acknowledge the enormity of the Holocaust, but they emphasize that Poland was the victim of both German and Soviet oppression and that many minorities suffered; debates over remembrance have bedeviled projects like a new World War II museum in the seaside city of *Gdansk*.

“On what basis should Poland decide that those with Jewish ances-

(Continued on page 7)

JAPAN AND THE JEWS

BY SHELDON KIRSHNER,
THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Japan’s attitude and policies toward Jews from 1933 to 1945 — the years that coincided with the rise and fall of Nazi Germany — is the subject of Meron Medzini’s fine and fascinating work of scholarship, *Under the Shadow of the Rising Sun: Japan and the Jews During the Holocaust Era*, published by Academic Studies Press.

The historiography of the Holocaust is rife with books about the mass murder of European Jews, yet Japan — a member of the Axis alliance and a close ally of Nazi Germany — is rarely mentioned in this grim catalog of terror and mass murder. The reason is clear. While many of the 40,000 Jews living in Japan and its overseas possessions were subjected to restrictions and theft of property due to their status as foreign nationals, they were not humiliated or persecuted because they were Jews. Nor were they singled out for extermination. Indeed, one Japanese diplomat single-handedly saved thousands of Jews.

Medzini, a Hebrew University historian, is one of the few scholars who has exhaustively delved into this

intriguing topic. Nevertheless, it remains still largely untapped. Medzini’s wide-ranging book fills the gap quite admirably. He deals with the influx of Jews into Japan from the mid-19th century, the image of Jews in Japanese society, the export of anti-Semitism to Japan, the treatment meted out to Jews in Japanese-occupied Manchuria, China and Southeast Asia and the policies Japan formulated with respect to Jewish refugees.

Portuguese conversos — Jewish converts to Christianity — were the first Jews to visit Japan. Jewish traders and entrepreneurs established themselves in Japan in the late 1850s, following the arrival of an American flotilla commanded by Mathew C. Perry. The majority of the newcomers were initially from Southeast Asia, China and Western Europe. Later, Jews arrived from the Middle East, Eastern Europe and the United States. They largely settled in the cities of *Nagasaki*, *Yokohama* and *Kobe*.

The majority of Jewish migrants were businessmen, but Albert Mosse, a German Jew, played an important role in the development of the 1889 Meiji constitution. Still other Jews, though not residents of Japan, were of immense assistance to the country.

The American banker and financier, Jacob Schiff, was instrumental in securing loans for Japan during its war with Russia.

Medzini claims that *The Merchant of Venice*, translated into Japanese in the 1880s, had an impact on Japanese perceptions of Jews. “Many Japanese readers thought that the typical Jew was Shylock: clever, sly, untrustworthy, and given to devious intrigues and manipulations,” he writes, adding that this stereotype would reappear with greater strength from the 1920s onward. Japan’s ruling elites had a keen interest, verging on admiration, for Jews, who they believed possessed special talents in finance and international politics and wielded vast influence over governments.

Anti-Semitism seeped into Japan after Japanese forces entered Siberia in 1918. Japanese officers, having been exposed to White Russians who poured scorn on the 1917 Bolshevik revolution and displayed hatred of Jews, brought back these ideas to Japan. By no coincidence, the army officer who translated the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* into Japanese had been posted in Siberia. An infantry officer, General Shioden Nobutaka, would become the most well-known and outspoken

anti-Semite in Japan during the 20th century. He had been influenced by French anti-Semites while serving as Japan’s military attache in Paris during World War I.

Nevertheless, the few thousand Jews living in Japan before World War II were never seen as fifth columnists determined to undermine Japanese culture, says Medzini. “They were, at best, part of the foreign community, and therefore they did not arouse the passionate, often hysterical response [Jews] encountered in Nazi Germany. Since they were never seen as an integral part of Japan, and subsequently were not viewed as enemies of that country, Japan’s society saw no need to destroy them.”

Nazi ideas infiltrated into Japan toward the end of the 1930s as Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* and Alfred Rosenberg’s *The Myth of the Twentieth Century* were retranslated and distributed. These turgid tracts may have reinforced the Japanese notion that Jews were disseminators of liberal, secular, universal, democratic and Marxist ideas.

The Japanese government supported Zionist aspirations for a Jewish national homeland in Palestine and endorsed the Balfour Declaration

(Continued on page 11)

WHY REMEMBERING THE HOLOCAUST MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

BY DORIAN GEIGER

Philip Riteman was just 13 when the Nazis shoved him and his family onto a train bound for Auschwitz from the *Pruzhany* ghetto in Poland. At the time, he and his family had no idea they were being carted to their deaths.



Philip Riteman was just 13 when the Nazis forced him and his family onto a train bound for Auschwitz.

“Three o’clock in the morning, somebody [yells] and I see the German sitting with a gun and screaming, yelling, ‘Out, out, you Jews!’” Riteman recalled.

They walked to the railroad tracks and Riteman saw freight trains stretching as far as his eyes could see. Riteman, a Polish Jew, said about 100 people were crammed into the trains, which measured roughly 8 by 20 feet. The Nazis told them it would be an hour’s ride.

“Two hours gone, three hours gone — all day on the train. [On] the train we shake. The train slow, slow, you hear rifle shooting, but you can’t see it because you look to the boards. And we stay, all glued together. Could you picture this? Can you imagine? I wouldn’t do this to animals.”

As the train clicked along the tracks on the seemingly endless ride, a man soon dropped dead at Riteman’s

feet — the first casualty of this tragic journey.

“A fellow behind me, a tall fellow, he says, ‘Maybe you can try shifting, move your feet, maybe one inch, everybody moves an inch, and see if we can put the dead body to the wall.’ We did this.”

The train continued rolling through the countryside. For what felt like days, a young mother’s baby began crying. Its screams still torment Riteman to this day. Then, it stopped.

“The baby died in the mother’s arms,” said Riteman bitterly. “She was hysterical.”

Six or seven days passed. There was no food, water or bathrooms.

“I peed every day in my pants. Everybody [defecates] in their pants and pees, and everybody screaming, crying — unbelievable they could do this to human beings.”

Then, one morning, they finally arrived at Auschwitz. Riteman was separated from his family, and it was the last time he would ever see them.

“In the afternoon, my parents already was gassed,” he said, with tears in his eyes.

“Trains after trains coming in. They gas them. Could you imagine? I couldn’t believe it. I was there a month and I didn’t believe they’d do this. I thought I was still going to see my parents. I will still see my sisters, my brothers. Then I found out. I see people going to the crematoriums, and they gassed 5,000, 10,000 at one time. It’s very, very hard for me to talk about it.”

Riteman’s entire family was exterminated by the Nazis. His father, mother, five brothers, two sisters, grandparents, and nine uncles and aunts

were annihilated in Auschwitz.

Riteman was later transferred to *Dachau* concentration camp. After being liberated by the Americans in 1945, he spent time in a displaced persons camp. He weighed just 34 kilograms.

Then, in 1946, he landed in Newfoundland, then pre-Confederation Canada.

This is just one gruesome snapshot of the Holocaust, which claimed the lives of about six million Jews during World War II. More than a million Jews like Riteman were hauled off to Auschwitz, but only a handful made it out alive. At least 960,000 perished there.

According to The Blue Card, an international organization that provides financial assistance and other resources to Holocaust survivors, there are an estimated 100,000 survivors still alive today, many of whom live in poverty.

“I will never forgive, and I will never forget,” said Fanny Starr, 95, another Polish Holocaust survivor who endured the terrors of Auschwitz.

Starr, who now lives in Denver, Colorado, lost her mother, two of her siblings, and many other family members to the gas chambers of the German concentration camp. She remembers the atrocities well. Ashes of burnt bodies fell like snow from the Auschwitz crematoriums, she said.

“That was such a heinous crime against humanity to try to annihilate our race,” Starr added. “But thank God, they didn’t succeed. Six million people lost. People who committed no crime, they killed nobody, without no reason, we were just slaughtered.”

The black tattoo ink on Riteman’s

left arm — the numbers, 98706, his Auschwitz prisoner ID — are forever etched there. Although the ink on his arm has faded, the horrific memories have not. The pain — and bitterness — from his time in Auschwitz still ring heavily in his voice.

“That’s got to be told to our children, our grandchildren, great, great, great-grandchildren. So long as the world exists, they should make sure that doesn’t happen to anybody. Period.”

Today, Riteman is 95. He’s tired, and hard of hearing. Yet, he’s still quite spry. At his quaint Canadian home in Halifax, Nova Scotia, which he shares with his 85-year-old wife Dorothy, whom he met in Montreal in 1947, Riteman stares off into the distance.

For decades, he didn’t speak about the horrors of the Holocaust, but it’s a subject he now discusses openly —



Fanny Starr.

and something he treats as a duty — largely so history doesn’t repeat itself.

“You people are lucky,” he said. “You’re living in heaven. You don’t even know it. I want you to wake up and make sure it doesn’t happen again. That’s the reason I’m speaking in schools, universities. Make sure [you] don’t hate nobody, don’t do no harm to anyone. Be a good person. Maybe we could make a better world to live for everybody.”

THE CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER FACING SWEDEN’S JEWS

Who is really stirring up anti-Semitism to new heights in Sweden? It’s not who you thought.

BY DANIEL RADOMSKI, HAARETZ

In 1945, my paternal grandparents were brought to the Swedish seaside industrial town of *Malmö* on buses organized by Count Folke Bernadotte’s Red Cross. Recently saved from the unspeakable horrors of Auschwitz, Frajda Rozental and Jankel Radomski did not know each other upon arrival in Sweden. They had both suffered dreadful losses — but they had survived.

For Jankel, his parents and siblings, as well as his newly founded young family, had all been executed. Frajda lost her father, her mother and all her siblings except one sister, a Zionist, who had left for Palestine before the war, and as a result was considered the black sheep of their small Hasidic

village. As was often the case with survivors, Frajda and Jankel, in an act of perseverance and survival, formed a new bond upon their arrival. The first result of this union came in 1946, in the shape of their firstborn — my father, Chaim.

My grandparents worked hard to integrate into Swedish society and to build a new life. The Sweden that offered a new beginning had chosen a self-proclaimed neutrality throughout the war, with the clear and pragmatic intention to protect the country against invasion at all costs. This included allowing the German troops of the Engelbrecht battalion free passage via railroad to Norway, enabling its occupation. Subsequently, over 1,000 Norwegian Jews perished in the concentration camps. Toward the end of the war the tide turned, and Sweden allowed Allied bombers to refuel on its territory, acting as the

destination for the extraordinary rescue of Danish Jews across the Straits of Öresund, and as the home for the White Buses that rescued my grandparents.

In 1969, my family again experienced the embrace of Swedish salvation. My mother Dora, a 19-year-old Polish student of chemistry, was given a way to escape from the new wave of anti-Semitism that engulfed Poland in the late 1960s. Sweden’s provision of yet another new future for my family secured my everlasting gratitude. However, the country’s wartime history still soiled its virtue. When compiling a high school essay on Sweden during World War II, I encountered graphic photographs of students of my very own school demonstrating in Stockholm’s Östermalmstorg Square in 1942. On their placards: “Stop the Import of Jews.”

As children of the postwar genera-

tion, we were taught to approach our Judaism as a distinctive but guarded bond. Non-Jews were commonly referred to as “Swedes” by my parents, and, even though I never knew any other homeland, for many years this paradox seemed natural to me. We took great pride in being part of a minority that united us and gave us strength as well as a sense of identity — unique features that willingly separated us from the Swedish mainstream. Although the Jews integrated after the war and subsequently excelled both in academia and in a wide array of professional pursuits, the internal will to retain the group’s separate and special standing was always present.

Many Jews who sought either a Zionist or Jewish religious lifestyle would seek it elsewhere, in Israel, the U.S. or the U.K. Leaving Sweden was

(Continued on page 13)

THE HOLOCAUST: WHO ARE THE MISSING MILLION?

(Continued from page 3)

"There is a lot of documentation where there are names that are very scattered," says Dr. Avram. "Names mentioned in a letter here or a report there. This can be very labor intensive. Sometimes you have to go through thousands and thousands of pages just to retrieve a few dozen names."

The difficulty is compounded by the fact that sources can be in 30 to 40 different languages; most are handwritten and can be in different scripts, such as Latin, Hebrew and Cyrillic. "Our staff not only need to be linguists but they need to know calligraphy," says Dr. Avram, himself a language expert.

One of the biggest gaps is with children, of whom some 1.5 million were murdered in the Holocaust. Only about half have been identified.

"It's one of the saddest things," says Dr. Avram. "We have reports where parents are named with, say, three or four children, unnamed. They were little children and people just don't remember."

The aim is to turn them from anonymous statistics into human beings again, like seven-year-old Edik Tonkonogi, from *Satanov* in Ukraine. His childish innocence and sweetness of character come across in a letter he wrote in 1941 to his parents, who were travelling with a Russian theater troupe.

Edik was murdered after the Nazis entered the town that same year. His name was later memorialized in a Page of Testimony by a relative.

As time moves on, the task of finding missing names is getting harder in some respects but easier in others. The availability of source

material is greater than ever, and advances in technology mean it can be a less arduous task to gather information and manipulate the data.

However, the fewer the names left to uncover, the more activity it takes to find them.

The digital age also means there



Claudia de Levie lost many family members in the Holocaust, but found new living relatives.

are more tools at researchers' disposal than ever before. The department searching for names recently took to social media, including Facebook, in a push to reach untapped survivors. The campaign generated many new Pages of Testimony.

"When you're talking about social media, you have the younger generation now understanding that those names are not in our database and trying to find out the information from their family members," says Sara Berkowitz, manager of the Names Recovery Project.

There is another significant, sometimes life-changing, outcome of the growth of the names database, which

has been available online since 2004. It has led to emotional reunions of survivors who had lived their lives not knowing there was anyone else from their family left alive.

Last year two sets of families belonging to two sisters, each of whom thought the other had perished

whose parents fled Germany in the 1930s, believed she had lost four or five relatives in the Holocaust. A search of the database to help with her daughter's homework revealed that in fact 180 family members had been killed.

Further research, however, revealed through a signature on a Page of Testimony the existence of cousins of her husband, living in *Hamburg*. The families now speak to each other each week on Skype.

Ironically, a chief architect of the Holocaust, Adolf Eichmann, lived as a fugitive in the same neighborhood as Claudia when she was a child in Argentina, as she would later learn.

The importance of the mission to recover victims' names received global recognition in 2013 when the United Nations cultural agency, UNESCO, included the collection in its Memory of the World register.

The agency lauded it as "unprecedented in human history," pointing out that the project had given rise to similar efforts in other places of genocide, such as Rwanda and Cambodia.

Despite the millions of names recorded so far, there is still a long way to go if all six million are ever to be recovered, but those behind the project remain determined.

"I personally would like that we do reach that goal, that at least among those who perished there won't be a person who remains unknown. It's our moral imperative," says Sara Berkowitz.

"Until I sit in the office and days will pass by and I won't have work to do, I'll know that we've more or less raked the universe to try to get to every name and there is no more there."

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS IN POLAND FIND RESTITUTION CLAIMS "LIKE A CAROUSEL"

(Continued from page 5)

tors get compensated, whereas Belarussians, Poles, Ukrainians or Crimean Karaites, or Tatars and Germans — all of whom used to live here before the war — shouldn't be compensated?" Jaroslaw Kaczynski, the leader of the governing party, asked supporters last year. (The Karaites and Tatars are minority groups that speak Turkic languages.)

"Is Poland able to turn back time and compensate all those who suffered in those tragic events?" he asked. "Does it mean that the descendants of poor Poles are supposed to pay the descendants of those who were rich? This is what it comes down to."

There is also a morass of legal issues. Poland says it is not to blame for the crimes of Nazi Germany, and it points to a 1952 agreement in which West Germany agreed to pay Israel reparations for wartime crimes. Communist-era governments also reached agreements with several

countries, including the United States, to resolve wartime property claims, Polish officials say.

Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, a historian who has written about restitution issues, said the report focused too narrowly on Jewish victims. While Polish Jews "faced the extraordinary terror of total extermination," he said, Polish Christians "faced the ordinary terror of partial annihilation."

Last year, Poland's constitutional court upheld a 2015 law that significantly limits the restitution rights of those whose property in Warsaw was seized during the war.

"Polish law treats everyone equally," the foreign minister, Witold Waszczykowski, said in Israel last year. "Any legal or natural person, or their heir, is entitled to recover prewar property unlawfully seized by the Nazi German or the Soviet authorities, or the postwar Communist regime."

However, Leslaw Piszewski, chairman of the board of the Union of

Jewish Religious Communities in Poland, said current policies made it far too difficult for claimants — effectively denying justice by delaying it.

"Attitudes have not changed at all," he said. "Courts issue negative decisions or prolong the process to the extent that the claimant resigns from the process."

The new report was presented at a conference in Brussels organized by Holocaust survivors and groups that represent them, and hosted by the European Parliament.

Gideon Taylor, the operations chairman of one of the groups, the World Jewish Restitution Organization, said he hoped the conference would be a "rallying call" before time ran out for survivors, 72 years after the war's end.

"We have a very narrow window of time, while survivors are still alive, to carry out some kind of symbolic justice, some kind of recognition of what has happened," he said.

The issue is not just symbolic but also practical, said Mr. Piszewski, whose group represents nine officially recognized Jewish communities, with an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 members. "Restitution is the only financial tool to maintain Jewish communities as well as the Jewish heritage, including 1,200 cemeteries," he said.

Ms. Rosenberg told her story at the conference, after much hesitation. The family that saved her has been recognized by Yad Vashem, the Holocaust remembrance center in Jerusalem, as being among the Righteous Among the Nations, non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews. A house her father owned in *Oswiecim* has been given to the family.

"Maybe this conference will make a difference," she said. "I really hope so. We have been trying on our own for 26 years. They say that maybe something will change in 20 years,

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANNUAL BENEFIT GALA OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM AND THE JEWISH LIFE FOUNDATION



Nathan Sandler, Karen Sandler, gala chair; Beth and Lenny Wilf.



Holocaust survivor Dr. Erica Miller; Bill Bernstein, Western Region director of institutional advancement of the ASYV; Gerri Knilans.



Sheldon and Dr. Miriam Adelson, Patrons of the Mount of Remembrance, Yad Vashem.



Michael Fisher, director of the American Desk of the International Relations Division; Shaya Ben Yehuda, managing director of the International Relations Division; Helmut Biemann; Yossie Hollander, Visionary Member, Yad Vashem.



Gitta and Jack Nagel, donors; Edward and Elissa Czuker, honorary co-chairs.



Fela Shapell and Rochelle Shapell Buchman, Visionaries of Yad Vashem.

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM ANNUAL SPRING LUNCHEON



Ron Meier, executive director of the ASYV; Dr. Na'ama Shik, featured speaker from Yad Vashem Jerusalem, Israel; Leonard Wilf, chairman of the ASYV; and Tova Friedman, featured speaker and Holocaust survivor.



Mark Moskowitz, Rose Moskowitz, Spring Luncheon Committee; and Adina Burian, Luncheon Committee.



Merry Cohen, Rebecca Altman, Marilyn Rubenstein, Helene Dorfman, Leslie Adler, Susan Levy, Judy Bloom, Susan Goodstadt.



Shelley Paradis, Sharon Halpern, Gladys Halpern, Maeira Werthenschlag, Luncheon Committee members; and Jaci Paradis, Luncheon co-chair.



Sarita Rausnitz, Shirley Podolsky, Rachel Shnay, Luncheon co-chair; Gabriela Shnay.



Eillene Lesitner, chief development officer, ASYV; Abby Kaufthal, Luncheon co-chair; Goldie Hertz, Luncheon Committee; and Shara Levy.

COUSINS TORN APART BY THE HOLOCAUST MEET FOR THE FIRST TIME AT YAD VASHEM

BY DEBORAH FINEBLUM, JNS.ORG

When Fania Bilkay and her son, Evgeni, stepped up to her desk, Sima Velkovich was winding down an ordinary work day in the archives division of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. She was then suddenly pulled into the center of a complex family drama that reached its climax in mid-December of last year.

During a recent tour of Poland to explore her roots, Bilkay had visited a Warsaw synagogue, where she discovered a document from Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names that counted her father, Nisan Band, and his family among those killed by the Nazis.

"Why is he listed as murdered?" she asked, confused — given that her father survived the Holocaust and died of natural causes in 1983, though he lost three children during the war and had always told Bilkay and her brother, Gennadi, that their entire extended family had been wiped out.

The document that erroneously reported Nisan's death had been completed in the 1950s by Symcha Borenstein, husband of Nisan's sister, Jenta. By disputing the record of her father's death, Bilkay spurred Yad Vashem researchers to discover that Jenta and Nisan both survived the Holocaust, and both spent their lives thinking they were the sole remaining members of their immediate family.

In a tear-filled scene at the Jerusalem museum on December 13, Fania and Gennadi were united with their first cousins, sisters Henia Borenstein Moskowitz and Ryvka Borenstein Patchnik.

"It is difficult to describe how I feel," said Bilkay. "My father always searched for members of his family and dreamed of finding them. He was alone. But in this meeting today, his dream has finally come true."

Jenta's daughters had also grown up believing "that we had no family, that everyone was murdered in Poland," Henia said.

"If someone on the phone told you that you have first cousins who want to meet you, you could be suspicious," said Lital Beer, director of Yad Vashem's Reference and Information Services. "But the sisters — Henia and Ryvka — were very open and excited. Their meeting was so moving. They brought family photos to share and discovered, to their amazement, that they've all been living all these years near Tel Aviv."

"I felt a connection at first sight. My family has grown overnight," said Henia. "Thanks to Yad Vashem, we discovered that we are not alone."

Such a reunion is perhaps the ultimate defeat of Hitler, said Dr. Thomas Kuehne, director of the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University in Worcester, Mass.

"The Nazis wanted to kill the Jews but also to erase the memory of them," he told JNS.org. "If they had been completely successful, not only

would the Jews be gone, but there would be no trace of them. This kind of reunion proves that they failed."

The Band/Borenstein family mystery, however, is not completely solved. The two Borenstein sisters know that their brothers Avram and Hercz-Lejb survived the war, but they lost track of them decades ago. "We haven't given up," said Yad Vashem spokesman Simmy Allen. "The broth-



The Band and Borenstein families unite at Yad Vashem's Hall of Names in Jerusalem.

ers are what our researchers are working on now."

To date, Yad Vashem has identified more than two-thirds — 4.6 million — of the Jews who were murdered during the Holocaust, recorded in the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names. It's an ongoing task that Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev calls "a mission to uncover the names of those who have no one to remember them."

Holocaust survivor Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, the former Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Israel and current chair of the Yad Vashem Council, said, "Our obligation, above all, is to complete the

database of names of our 6 million victims. The candle is about to be extinguished. With the number of people with their Auschwitz numbers tattooed on their arms growing ever smaller, it's very important and necessary that all this information be concentrated in one single database with six million names."

The simple act of adding a relative's name to Yad Vashem's database can also prove therapeutic for families, noted Myra Giberovitch, author of the 2014 book *Recovering from Genocidal Trauma*.

"Submitting this information enables family members to find some peace by knowing they have fulfilled their holy mission to bear witness," Giberovitch said.

Family members' names can be added to the database of Holocaust victims by contacting the Shoah Victims' Names Recovery Project at names.outreach@yadvashem.org.il. The names are ultimately added to the Pages of Testimony in Yad Vashem's Hall of Names. The pages, said Giberovitch, "are a paper cemetery that provides a final resting place for their loved ones, thereby preserving their memory for future generations. In the words of one survivor: 'It lessens my pain.'"

But for the Band and Borenstein families, this week is less about pain and more about celebrating. When Yad Vashem staffers offered the Borenstein sisters a ride home after the reunion, they politely declined because their newfound cousins insisted on driving them.

"The five of them squeezed into the car together," said Yad Vashem's Beer. "After all these years, they are family."

A MOROCCAN HERO TO JEWS

BY RICHARD HUROWITZ,
LOS ANGELES TIMES

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the release of *Casablanca*, which immortalized quiet acts of resistance against Fascism at the murky crossroads that was wartime Morocco.

The legendary scene at Rick's Cafe in which refugees, led by Paul Henreid, drown out Nazi officers by singing "La Marseillaise" became an instant inspiration to moviegoers as World War II was raging.

The location of the film was no accident: Casablanca was a haven for those fleeing for their lives. And it was also the scene of a much greater — and real-life — act of heroism, one far too little known or recognized: the protection of the Jews of Morocco by the young Sultan Mohammed V.

At a time when anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are on the rise globally, we should honor this overlooked but remarkable example of enlightened

leadership.

Born the third son of the reigning sultan's younger brother, Mohammed was an unlikely ruler from the start



Morocco's Mohammed V, wearing white robes, walking with the country's Grand Vizier Si Mohammed El Mokri after he placed a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior at the Arc de Triomphe during a visit to Paris, France around July 4, 1930.

and certainly an unexpected hero.

A series of international disputes between France and Germany led to the Treaty of Fez in 1912 and French control of Morocco. Mohammed's

father, Moulay Yousef, replaced his older sibling on the throne when his brother abdicated because of the treaty.

Fifteen years later, upon his father's death, 16-year-old Mohammed was named sultan largely because the French viewed him as more docile than his older brothers. This turned

out to be one of the great misjudgments in French colonial history.

When Paris fell to the Germans in July 1940, the sultan, then 30, was put in a precarious position as Morocco came under the rule of the collaborationist French Vichy regime.

Among their first acts, the new overseers sought to impose anti-Semitic laws in Morocco, as per Nazi protocol.

Jews had lived in that part of the world since well before Carthage fell, and over a quarter of a million called Morocco their home in 1940.

Members of the community had served the sultans' court as ministers, diplomats and advisors. Mohammed V took seriously his role as Commander of the Faithful, which he viewed to include all "people of the book," meaning everyone belonging to the Abrahamic faiths — Jews, Christians and Muslims. He bravely, publicly declined to assist in the persecution of his own Jewish citizens.

"There are no Jews in Morocco," he
(Continued on page 13)

JAPAN AND THE JEWS

(Continued from page 5)

when it was issued by Britain in November 1917. In explaining why Japan backed the Zionist movement, Medzini says Japanese decision-makers had an inflated view of Jewish power and placed the Middle East low on the totem pole of Japan's priorities.

Outside of Japan, Jews found themselves under direct Japanese rule after Japan's occupation of Manchuria in 1931. Many of these Jews lacked any nationality and sought the protection of the Japanese army. Japan acceded to their request, hoping its benevolence would prompt wealthy Jews to invest funds in the development of Manchuria's vital coal and steel industries.

Japan's fixation with Jewish capital gave rise to the Fugu Plan, a scheme hatched in 1934 by the president of the Southern Manchurian Railway, Matsuoka Yosuke, to lure 50,000 German Jews to Manchuria. Key officials in the Japanese government supported it, but it remained stillborn, never having been accompanied by a detailed operational plan.

Nonetheless, Japan cultivated a relationship with Jews. A senior Japanese army officer who addressed a meeting of the First Congress of the Jews in East Asia in Harbin in 1937 told delegates that Japan held no prejudices against Jews, did not subscribe to racist ideology, welcomed friendly ties with Jews and was ready to cooperate with them in economic and commercial spheres. After Japan joined the Axis Pact in 1940, the Japanese foreign minister, speaking on behalf of Japan's emperor, told Lev Zyckman, a leader of Harbin's Jewish community, that Germany's anti-Semitic policies did not obligate Japan to adopt the same position.

The Jewish refugee question turned into an important issue for Japan

because it was bound up with German-Japanese relations. "The problem was how to avoid doing anything positive for Jews that would harm Japan's ties with Nazi Germany while also avoiding alienating American Jews, whose economic power was seen by Japan as dominant," writes Medzini.

Given such conflicting considerations, he goes on to say, Japan struck something of a compromise toward refugees, deciding that no visas would be issued to stateless Jewish



refugees and that Jews holding valid German and Austrian passports should be persuaded to seek shelter in countries other than Japan. Jews already holding entry visas to a third country would be permitted to obtain transit visas to Japan.

Medzini's chapter on Shanghai deals, of course, with refugees. From 1938 to 1941, 15,450 Jewish refugees, the bulk from Germany and Austria, streamed into the Chinese city of Shanghai, which came under direct Japanese rule in the summer of 1937. By then, there was already an established Jewish community there. The first wave of Jewish settlers had arrived from Iraq, Persia and India in the middle of the 19th century, followed by Russian Jews in the wake of the Bolshevik revolution.

Jews arriving in Shanghai from the late 1930s onwards did not require

entry and residence permits. Japan treated them and other foreigners fairly while maintaining close surveillance over their activities. The situation changed after the arrival of German colonel Joseph Meisinger in July 1942. The Gestapo's senior representative in Japan, he had committed war crimes against Jews in Poland.

In conversations with Japanese army officers, Meisinger called for a series of stringent measures to be enacted against Jews in Shanghai. Japan rejected most of his draconian

suggestions, but on February 18, 1943, Japanese authorities established a "designated area" for 14,000 stateless Jewish refugees in the working-class district of Hongkew. Russian Jews were excluded from this ordinance. Life was hard for the residents of the Hongkew ghetto, but they were not physically molested, and American Jewish organizations were permitted to send funds for their upkeep.

Jews residing in other Japanese-controlled Chinese cities, like Mukden and Tianjin, were not harmed either. But in Hong Kong, Manila, Singapore, Batavia and Rangoon, the local Japanese ruler confiscated the homes and real estate holdings of Jews, froze their bank accounts, and seized their gold and jewels. In Thailand, an ally of Japan until almost the end of the war, Jews with U.S. and British passports were interned. German, Austrian, Iraqi and Syrian Jews were left alone. In keeping with its stated policy of maintaining racial harmony in the occupied areas, Japan gave short shrift to Germany's genocidal approach to Jews.

Whenever possible, however, Japan tried to mollify Germany. The case of Chiune

Sugihara, the Japanese vice-consul in Kaunas, Lithuania, is indicative of Japan's balancing act. The Japanese government forbade him to issue transit visas to Japan to a group of Polish Jews, but he ignored his superiors' order and issued 6,000 visas for individuals and entire families. Among the Jews he rescued from 1940 onwards were 300 rabbis and yeshiva students. After being transferred to Berlin, he issued 69 transit visas to German Jews.

In Japan itself, American and British Jews were interned, but Jews holding other foreign passports seem to have faced no problems. Neither the emperor nor government ministers ever issued statements about Jews, but in 1944, the home minister made it clear that Japan's policy was to eradicate discrimination based on race.

Still, 170 anti-Semitic books were published in Japan from 1936 until 1945. Some major dailies, notably *Asahi Shimbun*, carried anti-Semitic articles, but refrained from publishing stories about Nazi atrocities in Europe. The German embassy in Tokyo disseminated anti-Jewish material to the Japanese media, but the Nazi regime never considered the Jewish Question a high-priority issue in its deliberations with the Japanese government. In any event, most Japanese people were oblivious to Jews and, therefore, anti-Semitism.

Documents examined by Medzini indicate that Japanese officials had little or no detailed information about the Holocaust. "There were virtually no Japanese reports of the mass killings of Jews," he says. Japanese diplomatic and consular documents relating to Jews focused instead on visas and other matters pertaining to Jewish migration.

In short, as Medzini suggests, Japan was neither obsessed by Jews nor infected by anti-Semitism.

ROSES IN A FORBIDDEN GARDEN

(Continued from page 4)

somewhat better living quarters, along with an implied promise that as long as he performed well, he and his wife and daughter would not be shipped out to a death camp. (Such arrangements existed in many other major Nazi camps.)

Only after the family moved in did they learn their room was located directly above a ward of insane prisoners, from whom screams and shrieks were endlessly heard. As well, it lacked windows and included insatiable bloodsucking bedbugs whose bites left Inge so ill she almost died.

Taking great care, Carl chose to make secret desperate efforts to save lives, as when, for example, he learned a particular train soon to leave *Theresienstadt* for a death camp would not accept bedridden passengers. He rushed about the dorm urging his elderly wards to

become and/or stay bedridden, thereby exempting many from at least that particular deadly trip. Had his ruse been discovered, his entire family could have been sent to the gas chamber: the Third Reich was determined to repress evidence that the ranks of the *untermensch* [subhumans] included some who were compassionate, ethical, and moral human beings willing to risk all to help others.

Little wonder, accordingly, that survey interviews secured by survivor/scholar Alexander J. Groth and his associates from 251 survivors in the late 1990s found that "many more see Jews [like Carl Katz] as doing what they could to help and ameliorate conditions for fellow Jews rather than the opposite." In a fashion consistent with this research endorsement, Carl, on returning to Bremen in 1945 after liberation, reestablished the Jewish Community Center he had

led before being sent to *Theresienstadt*.

Inge's participation in stealth altruism had her, as a keeper of official data on daily deaths, dare to secretly keep a separate record of the names and death dates of Jews from her hometown. She thought this "the only way she could think of to honor them; that is, to retain some record of their existence and of their death." Discovery of her unauthorized illegal record would probably have had the entire family sent to the gas chamber.

In sum, then, three memorable profiles distinguish the story of the Katz family experiences in *Theresienstadt*. We take away the instructive model of Carl Katz, a man whose integrity as both a prisoner and an administrator helped save lives. We learn from Inge Katz how to stay human in an atrocious setting. We are inspired by Schmuel

Berger's rewards from bravery, prayer, and romantic commitment. Taken together, this artfully told story emphasizes altruism rather than atrocities; care, rather than cruelty; and valor rather than victimization. It highlights our ability as care-valuing Jews to transcend the worst if we help one another hold on to the best.

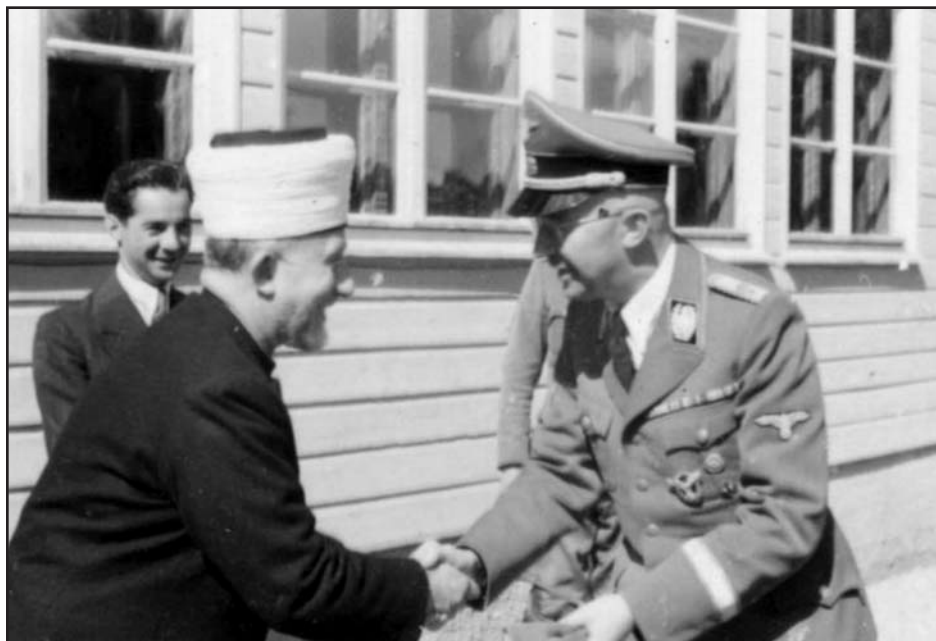
Art Shostak is an academic sociologist with degrees from Cornell and Princeton. He has taught at the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University. He is the author of 34 sociology books and over 160 articles. He is the recipient of the Distinguished Career Award for the Practice of Sociology. Since 1971 Art Shostak has made 10 study visits to Israel, and in 2017, a related book of his was published: Stealth Altruism: Forbidden Care as Jewish Resistance in the Holocaust.

THE MUFTI AND THE HOLOCAUST, REVISITED

BY BEN COHEN, JNS

“If a man was a Jew, it was good enough for him to be killed or stamped out,” wrote a senior British official serving abroad to his superiors in London in 1929.

From where was this gentleman — Major Alan Saunders — writing his dispatch? From *Munich* or Berlin or any of the other German cities where Hitler’s Nazi Party was gaining supporters and street thugs? In fact, no.



Hajj Amin al-Husseini meeting with Heinrich Himmler (1943).

Major Saunders was the head of the British police in Palestine during the mandate period, and his statement concerned the massacre by Arabs, in August 1929, of 69 Jews in *Hebron*, a city where their community had been a continuous presence for at least two millennia.

I was reminded of Major Saunders’s pithy summary of the motive behind the *Hebron* pogrom when news broke of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s speech to the World Zionist Congress in Jerusalem, in which he essentially argued that it was the mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, who crystallized the idea of the mass extermination of the Jews in Adolf Hitler’s mind. But before I talk about the controversy that followed these comments, I want to make some more general observations by way of introduction.

The first is that, while Hitler unarguably remains the most powerful and devastating anti-Semite to ever hold state power, he was far from the only one at that time to approach the “Jewish question” in exterminationist terms. As Major Saunders related from faraway Palestine, about an episode that presaged the Nazi atrocities that were to follow in Germany and then in occupied Europe and North Africa, the same hatred of Jews simply for being Jews was in painful evidence there. For there were thousands, even millions, of ordinary people in Europe and the Middle East who regarded the Jews as a social and religious poison and wanted them — all of them — dead. In that sense,

the Führer was their representative and their master.

The second is that, as an Israeli Jew, Netanyahu is naturally sensitive to the Palestinian Arab dimension of the broader issue of collaboration with the Nazis, something I can relate to. As a kid, I remember sitting around my grandfather’s table with his relatives from Bosnia — men with sad eyes and the muscles and paunches of retired boxers, who had spent their youths in the Socialist-Zionist Hashomer Hatzair movement, gradu-

ating to fight with Marshal Tito’s Communist partisans against the Nazi occupation of Yugoslavia that began in 1941. Men who, I realized with awe, had actually killed some of these Nazis that I’d seen in the movies.

And yet, when they spoke about the war, their anger really flowed when they remembered the locals who had assisted the Germans. Like Netanyahu now, what they found hardest to stomach was the spectacle of those non-Jews who lived alongside them collaborating with the Nazi extermination program.

In the pantheon of Nazi collaborators, Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husseini is right up there with Pavelić in Croatia, Pétain in France, Horthy in Hungary, and all the other quislings — their name comes from the collaborationist leader in Norway, Vidkun Quisling — who implemented Hitler’s will. It was, ironically, the British authorities who appointed him to his position in 1921. During the 1929 massacre in *Hebron*, as during the openly anti-Semitic 1936–39 Arab revolt in Palestine, al-Husseini proved himself a confirmed Jew-hater and the natural ally of Hitler in the Arab and Muslim worlds.

It wasn’t until November 1941 that the mufti met Hitler in person. Significantly, in the view of many historians, that encounter in Berlin took place two months before the *Wannsee* conference, where leading Nazis led by Hitler’s security chief, Reinhard Heydrich, plotted the implementation of the “Final Solution” — the extermination of the Jews.

In the official German record of their

discussions (not an exact transcript, but a summary of what was said), it was clear that both Hitler and the mufti were already in agreement that the Holocaust had to be visited upon the Jews. For his part, the mufti expressed his appreciation of Germany’s commitment to the “elimination of the Jewish national home,” while Hitler restated his “active opposition to the Jewish national home in Palestine, which was nothing other than a center, in the form of a state, for the exercise of destructive influence by Jewish interests.”

For good measure, the Führer added that “Germany was also aware that the assertion that the Jews were carrying out the functions of economic pioneers in Palestine was a lie. The work there was done only by the Arabs, not by the Jews” — a slander that could easily be expressed in the exact same words by the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement that targets the “Jewish national home” in our own time.

That last point highlights a critical factor which the furor around Netanyahu’s speech — much of it generated by visceral opponents of Israel who only talk about the Holocaust when it justifies their backing of Palestinian violence against Jews now — has largely missed.

During the 1930s, both Germany and Palestine were the sites of mob violence, boycotts, and discriminatory laws and regulations against Jews. The Nazis’ consolidation of power in the 1930s was what enabled them to launch their campaign of war and genocide at the end of that decade.

Had Palestine been conquered by the Germans from the British, there is no doubt that the mufti would have

been installed as the local quisling, and that the entire Jewish population would have been shipped to concentration and death camps in Europe — assuming that the Germans and their Arab militias didn’t build similar camps in the vicinity, of course. That

was the mutual vision expressed in Berlin in 1941, the distinctly Arab contribution to the achievement of the “Thousand-Year Reich.”

As the German historian Matthias Kuentzel has noted, the 700,000 Jews in the Middle East were in Hitler’s sights when he received the mufti. “As Hitler envisaged it, after the assault on the Soviet Union, the *Wehrmacht* would also occupy the Caucasus and so open the way to the Middle East...Part of this scenario was the killing of the Jews,” Kuentzel writes. Even though this grand ambition failed, the mufti was still able, as the prominent Israeli Holocaust historian Yehuda Bauer put it, to be “an active partner in devising the Final Solution.” The mufti also played a role in its implementation, raising three SS divisions composed of Bosnian and Albanian Muslims in the western Balkans.

Nor did the mufti forget Palestine. The Israeli scholar Edy Cohen has revealed how, in May 1943, he blocked a deal agreed to by the British and the Germans to allow 4,000 Jewish children to enter Palestine in exchange for 20,000 German prisoners of war, while in 1944, he parachuted a terror cell into Tel Aviv with the intention of poisoning the local water supply.

The mufti, disgracefully, escaped the *Nuremberg* trials of Nazi war criminals and ended his days in Beirut in 1974. His legacy survives in the daily incitement against Jews that emanates from Palestinian official and social media. So, when considering the latest Netanyahu controversy, please remember this: Those Holocaust scholars who criticized Netanyahu’s speech nonetheless recognize the fun-



November 1943, al-Husseini greeting Bosnian *Waffen-SS* volunteers with a Nazi salute.

damental, bitter fact of Palestinian anti-Semitism and the mufti’s position in fomenting it. It is the Palestinian leadership and its supporters — who have offered neither an apology nor reparations for the mufti’s crimes against the Jews — who don’t.

THE CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER FACING SWEDEN'S JEWS

(Continued from page 6)

and is a case of pull rather than push, as the established spectrum of pro-Israeli or religious activities here is not comprehensive and distinctive enough for some Swedish Jews. I know, as I was one of these Jews that left for Israel at the age of 18 to fulfill both Zionist and religious aspirations by volunteering at a kibbutz, studying at a yeshiva academy on Israel's northern border and serving in the Israel Defense Forces. At no point was this due to persecution or even the lack of acceptance of my religion by my fellow Swedes; rather, it was the manifestation of my own convictions.



Jewish refugees are ferried out of Denmark aboard Danish fishing boats bound for Sweden. October 1, 1943.

A similar choice is currently being made by many Jewish families in *Malmö*, a town now globally infamous for anti-Semitism. These families may leave *Malmö*, but rather than going to Israel, they settle in the larger and more vibrant Jewish community of Stockholm. They have chosen an internal emigration rather than leaving Sweden's borders. Bearing in mind the reports, articles and surveys that detail the anti-Semitic atmosphere in Sweden, what is behind this choice? Why would the Jews of *Malmö* risk staying in Sweden instead of leaving the country? Why would any Jew? Are the Jews of Sweden wishful thinkers or just ignorant? Doesn't the majority of Swedish Jewry see the clear and present danger that is being described, not least by the Simon Wiesenthal Center and other international anti-racist organizations?

To understand the answers to these questions, we need to look beyond the convenient and glib "truth" that I hear too many times in Israel: "Europe — a continent of anti-Semites and Muslims — is lost. All sensible Jews should make *aliyah* and get the hell out of there!" As an advocate for Israel, I have grown accustomed to the sweeping generalizations made by our adversaries. These generalizations — directed at Israeli settlements, wartime conquests, Israeli public opinion and

many other subjects — are usually based on ignorance or malice, and frequently both. We now risk making the same generalization regarding Sweden, without looking at the core issues at hand.

It is no coincidence that *Malmö*, with its large Muslim population, has seen a vast increase in anti-Semitic attacks. Let me explain why. First, a point of order: Swedes are sticklers for order and administration, even compared to their fellow EU citizens, and this includes the proper registration of crimes. This goes some way toward explaining the country's disheartening statistics reported in recent EU surveys.

Secondly, and more importantly, the recent rise in anti-Semitic activity in Sweden originates largely from the Arab and Muslim communities. Here, many immigrants have backgrounds that are directly linked to the Israeli-Arab conflict, and hail from countries where classic anti-Semitism is commonly accepted, encouraged by politicians and even taught in schools. Anti-Semitism in Sweden is commonly hidden under a very thin veil of anti-Zionism and anti-Israeli sentiments. Therefore it's relatively easy to see the direct correlation between certain events in the Middle East, such as the Second Lebanon War in 2006, and an increase in local anti-Semitic attacks.

Thirdly, most crucially and discouragingly, the current political climate in Sweden is a key enabler for the rise of anti-Semitic attacks. This is Swedish Jewry's real clear and present danger; a fatal combination of political correctness, self-righteousness and obliviousness, as leading politicians and opinion makers participate in or blatantly ignore a disproportionate demonization of Israel that frequently crosses the line into anti-Semitism. This has created a climate where it is acceptable and encouraged to support calls for Israel's destruction, deliberately ignoring the effect such support has as a vehicle for the rise in Swedish anti-Semitism.

The ever-so-convenient distinction

between hate for Israel and hate for Jews, although very popular with Swedish media and politicians, is not respected by the enemies of either Israel or the Jews. The public acceptance of this type of anti-Israel attitude, which directly harbors anti-Semitism, is compounded by — among others — the leading Social Democrat and former *Malmö* mayor Illmar Reepalu, who stated publicly that his city's Jews were themselves to blame for the rise of anti-Semitic attacks, as they did not distance themselves clearly enough from Israel. After the end of his term, Reepalu was promoted by his party, Sweden's largest, to a seat on its powerful executive committee.

We need to call a spade a spade: There is no general deterioration in the quality of life for Jews in Sweden because of anti-Jewish laws or a general persecution of Jews. The recent debates regarding circumcision and kosher slaughter are symptoms of Swedish society unsuccessfully trying to come to grips with its colossal failure in integrating the recent waves of Muslim immigrants. As in many other countries, there are right-wing political parties that are more than ready to cross the common line of political correctness and pick up these issues in the populist pursuit of votes.



Anti-Semitic hate crimes on the rise in Sweden.

A city like *Malmö* has vast social issues to be resolved, which is the reason for many inhabitants, including Jews, to seek their fortunes elsewhere.

However, the problem is not *Malmö*, or even the predictable hate against both Israel and Jews that is being displayed and acted upon by certain elements of its population. It is the eagerness, with a small number of outstanding exceptions, of the mainstream media, politicians and opinion makers to ignore and hide current anti-Semitism under the cover of disproportionate and unjustified criticism of Israel. These attitudes should not be tolerated in modern Swedish society, and until they are recognized and openly discussed, the tide of anti-Semitism against Swedish Jews will continue to rise.

A MOROCCAN HERO TO JEWS

(Continued from page 10)

declared. "There are only Moroccan subjects."

Vichy authorities soon forced Mohammed V to promulgate two laws restricting certain professions and schools to Jews and requiring them to live in ghettos. In an act of resistance, the sultan declined to fully enforce the laws. A direct descendant of Muhammad, the founder of Islam, through Muhammad's daughter Fatimah, the sultan refused to be intimidated. A French government telegram, discovered in Paris archives four decades later, reported that relations between France and Morocco became "much more tense since the day" the laws went into effect. In 1941, for the first time, Mohammed V made a point of inviting senior representatives of the Jewish community to the annual banquet celebrating the anniversary of his sultanate and placing them in the best seats next to the French officials.

"I absolutely do not approve of the new anti-Semitic laws and I refuse to associate myself with a measure I disagree with," he told the French officials. "I reiterate as I did in the past that the Jews are under my protection and I reject any distinction that should be made amongst my people."

Although there were limits to his power, Mohammed V ensured that there were never roundups of Jews in Morocco; it remained a haven to the extent possible. During Vichy rule — which lasted more than two years — no Moroccan Jews were deported or killed; nor were they forced to wear the yellow star. When Allied troops liberated North Africa, the Moroccan Jewish community was essentially intact.

The sultan's actions offer a contrast with those of other leaders who rallied to the side of the Axis powers in hopes of driving the Jews from Palestine and the British from the Middle East. The grand mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin Husseini, for example, spent the war years in Berlin, courting Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler, plotting the extermination of the Jews and recruiting Eastern European Muslims to fight for the Nazi cause.

Mohammed V, on the other hand, was a strong supporter of the Allies. Throughout the sultan's reign, he continued to protect his Jewish subjects. When the Arab world reacted violently to the declaration of the state of Israel in 1948, the sultan reminded Moroccans that Jews had always been protected in their country and should not be harmed.

Mohammed V died suddenly in 1961, just four years after Morocco became an independent constitutional monarchy and he gained the title of king. The outpouring of grief was immense. Some 75,000 Jews publicly mourned, the chief rabbi delivered a memorial address by radio, and Jews were prominent participants at the coronation of his son Hassan II and at the new king's initial prayer services.

PHILLIP MAISEL AND HIS PURPOSE

BY SARAH FARNSWORTH, ABC NEWS

For Phillip Maisel the stories of Holocaust survivors are like watching lava bubbling up from deep inside: a burning trauma they need to release.

"Testimony is a process where people expose their inner life to the public, and my aim as the interviewer is to get all the facts as close to the truth."

For the past 25 years, the tech-savvy 94-year-old has been recording the stories of survivors in his own makeshift studio at the Melbourne Holocaust Center. He's helped by a small band of volunteers.

"If people survived, it was a miracle," he said.

"When I want to convince people to give a testimony, I just tell them 'You had the privilege to survive the Holocaust, you should talk for those that can't do it anymore.'"

He's recorded 1,600 testimonies. The longest runs for 10 hours.

"When I'm interviewing I'm a

machine. I am listening and recording it, but when I go home and start to think about it, then yes, I feel pain."

"THE LAST TIME SHE SAW ME"

In and among the DVDs and tapes stacking up around him, is a story very close to his heart, that of his twin sister Bella Hirshorn.

Bella rarely talks about the



Phillip Maisel has been recording the testimony of Holocaust survivors for 25 years.

Holocaust. It is too upsetting. However, her love for her brother was made clear in her recorded 1993 testimony.

"I have two brothers. A twin brother who is the best thing that ever happened to me in my life. I am very grateful to my parents for him," Bella said in the testimony.

Growing up in Vilna, then in Poland, the Maisel twins were inseparable.

"We would wear similar outfits. We were at school together, at home together, on holidays together," Phillip recalls.

They also shared an unusual Yiddish accent. Not that they needed to speak much.

"Wherever I went, my sister went with me."

When the Germans arrived in Vilna in 1941, their lives changed dramatically.

By September, Jewish families were being given 20 minutes to pack their belongings and leave their homes.

Phillip and his father were forced to move to the Jewish ghetto, an area of

Vilna where the Germans forced tens of thousands to live.

Bella managed to avoid the harsh and miserable conditions of the ghetto. Using fake papers, she hid in plain sight, pretending to be Polish.

"It's extremely traumatic to live outside the ghetto and pretend that you are a Pole when you are a Jew," Phillip explained.

Two years passed before Phillip was ripped from his sister completely. She watched on as soldiers, liquidating the ghetto, arrested her brother in the street and dragged him away.

"I was working for a German institution which could protect the Jews from being arrested and deported," Phillip said.

"So I showed him my papers and [the soldier] said 'not today, no papers are valid.'"

"That was the last time she saw me in Vilna."

Bella told a yet-to-be-aired documentary called *Not Without You*, about the day her brother was taken.

(Continued on page 15)

HOLOCAUST REGENERATION: FOR CHILDREN OF SURVIVORS, THE TRAUMA'S IN THE GENES

BY VIVIEN FELLEGI, NOW MAGAZINE

Pearl Goodman didn't feel safe in her own bedroom.

Lying awake in her room late at night, heart pumping, ears tuned to noises outside, she was terrified even by the sounds of fire engines rushing to the aid of the injured.

"Someone is in a life-threatening situation," she thought. "Maybe me."

Goodman's childhood fears were not entirely self-created. To her, they were somehow linked to her parents' tragic experiences during the Holocaust. Her Polish mother survived a slave labor camp. Her father endured a concentration camp.

"I inherited their sensibility that awful things can happen at any time," says Goodman.

Her mother was constantly on high alert, concerned for her children's safety. When Pearl was in the bathtub, her mother would knock several times to make sure she was okay, as if her child could drown. She distrusted her daughter's friends and worried about Pearl when she went on sleepovers. She could never say, "Go out and have a good time"; she had left her father and brother at a train station during World War II, thinking nothing of it until they never returned home.

Goodman's parents' overprotectiveness made it difficult for them to separate emotionally from her, too.

"My parents couldn't allow me to just feel differently about something without being threatened."

As a teenager, Goodman spoke up against some of her parents' views. Heated arguments ensued. She

always felt overwhelming guilt afterward. "My parents lived through the Holocaust. My issues paled in comparison to that," she says.

While we used to think that genes were immutable, they can actually change in response to the environment, says Rachel Yehuda, director of the Traumatic Stress Studies Division at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City, who along with Mallory Bowers co-authored a study on the subject of "epigenetics" last year.



Their research shows that human genes can change in order to help the body adapt to a stressful environment. Trauma survivors often say, "I am not the same person — I left myself on the battlefield," says Yehuda. These people have the same DNA, but something fundamental has shifted as a result of what happened to them. And these alterations can be passed down to the next generation.

Bowers, a postdoctoral fellow in

psychiatry, says many Holocaust survivors acquired a modification of a gene that amplifies arousal.

"This heightened attentiveness makes you more aware of your surroundings," she says.

That might help you live through a concentration camp, but the pumped-up stress response can also lead to anxiety and post-traumatic stress in survivors and their children.

But not all the problems of Holocaust survivors and their families have to do with genetic mishaps, says

says. Fearful of another genocide, Yaakobi says, Holocaust survivors were often overprotective and frowned on their children's engaging with outsiders.

Children of survivors felt oppressed by that tight grip, but guilt stopped them from rebelling. "It was difficult to rebel against parents if they had suffered," says Yaakobi.

In spite of these challenges, many second-generation Holocaust victims became successful occupationally; their parents usually valued education as a means of promoting their children's survival.

Bowers hopes researchers will someday figure out how to undo the epigenetic changes brought about by the Holocaust. For now, though, she recommends social support.

Yaakobi agrees. Participating in a group therapy setting can be very helpful. "It's very healing to be understood," she says.

What helped Goodman was finding out that trauma can be passed down through the generations, a fact she discovered during her training to become a psychotherapist.

"It was like a light bulb went on for me," she says.

Suddenly, the events of her childhood began to make sense. This recognition eventually led her to write her memoir, *When Their Memories Became Mine: Moving Beyond My Parents' Past*.

Goodman says she's come to terms with her family's legacy. She values the justice, integrity and sense of humor instilled in her by her parents. "In my soul I embody a sense that there was tragedy, and it's terrible," she says. "But I'm all right."

Baycrest social worker Shoshana Yaakobi.

As a result of trauma, many Holocaust survivors had difficulty giving of themselves emotionally, says Yaakobi. Stressful situations dealing with their own kids exposed their vulnerability, which could surface in the form of heightened anxiety.

Rather than nurture their children, some expected their kids to make up for what had happened to them, she

HE REMARKABLY ESCAPED THE HOLOCAUST

BY ELLA NAYOR,
FLORIDA WEEKLY

Cesare Frustaci may be a Hungarian version of our own Forrest Gump.

On his own as a 7-year-old, he evaded the Nazis in 1941 in Budapest, Hungary, for months before being captured and moved to a detention camp, where he was imprisoned until the liberation.

But a number of chance encounters with famous people, such as Italy's foreign minister and a future pope, would change his life.

Forced out of Italy as a child with his Jewish mother, the renowned Hungarian ballerina Margit Wolf, he was relocated to the Jewish ghetto in Nazi-occupied Budapest. His father, Italian composer Pasquale Frustaci, a Roman Catholic, was forced to remain in Italy.

Fearing that life in the ghetto was about to turn for the worse, his mother smuggled him out of the ghetto, gave him his baptismal certificate — although he was Jewish by birth, he was baptized in his father's religion — and told him not to return. He began to live on the streets of Budapest, as a 7-year-old.

"It was well known that children and teenagers were rounded up by the Nazis and drowned every day," said Mr. Frustaci. "My mother was a rather smart woman to separate from her son. She thought I might be safer on the street."

Soon after, his mother was sent to *Spandau* concentration camp near Berlin, Germany.

So, for the next couple of months, Cesare hid in the cellar of an apartment building. During the day he strategized ways to survive.

He collected tennis balls for tips at the nearby tennis club. The money he made went for food. Then he asked management at one of the clubs if he could clean the bathrooms, for free. This allowed him to take care of his hygiene needs.

One day, Cesare recalled, he was walking along the bridge that stretches over the Danube River when he heard shouting. He recalls a young SS officer shouting at a young woman carrying a baby.

Cesare watched the guard hurl the baby into the river and shoot the woman.

"That was the atmosphere in the summer of 1941," he said. "What was surprising were the pedestrians. They didn't do anything. They just walked away. It was like it was just a normal day."

Shortly after that incident, Cesare was captured and sent to a juvenile detention camp.

There, life was harsh.

"I remember waking up next to dead children," Mr. Frustaci said.

The end of the war liberated the detention center and Cesare.

But he would have a longer way to go in his journey. Unaccompanied children, like Cesare, were placed in adoptive homes since their parents were presumed dead.

They were often placed in agricultural settings where they could work and help rebuild war-torn farms. A kind pig farmer and his family adopted Cesare and renamed him Geza Babaly. He moved to a small village named *Apaggy*, about 20 miles north of Budapest.

After liberation, Cesare's mother set out from *Spandau* in Germany to find her son. She walked

Ciano — the son-in-law of Benito Mussolini. A news photographer captured an image of Cesare falling into the dignitary's arms as he stumbled to give the flowers to him. After the war, Cesare's mother went back to her damaged apartment and found the photo clipping, and set out to find her son.

After a year and half of searching village to village, she finally found him.

"She never gave up (trying) to find me," Mr. Frustaci said.

The pair continued to live behind the Iron Curtain, as Hungary was a Soviet satellite. There, Cesare completed his primary education. As an exceptional student, especially in math and engineering, he wanted to go to a university in Italy. But the Communists said no. They didn't want to lose a talented future engineer.

So, Cesare was again trapped.

However, his mother's friend knew a priest who thought he could help persuade the Hungarian government to allow Cesare to return to Italy. The Rev. Angelo Roncalli used what pull he had, and Cesare emigrated from Hungary to Italy, where he completed his engineering studies.

Father Roncalli went on to become Pope John XXIII.

Today, Mr. Frustaci spends his time traveling around the country sharing his story.

"It is my mission since 2004 to pass the torch to the younger generations — the history of Second World War and the Holocaust," he said.



Cesare Frustaci.

all the way to Budapest. Mr. Frustaci compares his mother's trek to that of walking from Florida to Canada.

She combed through nearly 200 villages carrying a newspaper image of Cesare as a young child. When he was in kindergarten, he was picked to give a bouquet of flowers to visiting Italian dignitary Count Galeazzo

PHILLIP MAISEL AND HIS PURPOSE

(Continued from page 14)

"My father was very, very upset and said I should have gone with him," she said.

For years the twins struggled to survive, each not knowing what had happened to the other.

Phillip was taken from Vilna to a hard labor camp in Estonia, then to numerous concentration camps across occupied Europe.

At one point both twins ended up at the Stutthof concentration camp at the same time, but neither knew the other was there.

A SAD KIND OF FREEDOM

Phillip was liberated in 1945 while on a death march.

"First I was very happy. I was free," he said.

"But then I realized that I was somewhere in Germany I didn't know what had happened to my family. It was a very, very sad feeling."

He was all alone.

He would later discover his father was killed at *Klooga*.

Yet a chance meeting with a man from the American-controlled zone of

Germany returned hope to Phillip's life. The man was looking for his own family when he struck up a conversation with Phillip.

my sister."

Phillip rode his motorbike the equivalent of 500 kilometers to collect his sister.



Bella and Phillip, in 1929, could communicate just by "looking at each other."

"He said you have a very funny Yiddish [accent] and I know another girl who speaks with a similar accent. She is in my camp," he said.

"I said to him I know her name. It's

Three million Polish Jews were killed during the Holocaust.

Seventy-two years on, Phillip rings his sister every morning to ask how she is and tell her the weather forecast.

"TELL THE WORLD WHAT HAPPENED"

It was while struggling to survive in an Estonian work camp that Phillip made a promise he has kept to this day.

"When you ask me is it sometimes difficult to listen to the testimonies, I am fulfilling something that I promised, and this makes it a little bit easier."

The survivors' stories have been told and retold to Phillip over the decades. He says memories change and over time things become more important to those who survived.

He has also started to interview the third generation, to see if the trauma of the Holocaust has affected the descendants of Holocaust survivors.

At 94, Phillip can still be found filming at the Jewish Holocaust Center.

He'd like to see his work publicly accessible one day.

"If the human race wants to survive, we should be fully conscious of being human beings, we should love each other instead of hate, and the result of hate is terrible."

WE WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP THE FLAME OF REMEMBRANCE SHINING BRIGHT

(Continued from page 1)

face of Yad Vashem; memorialized their first son Uziel, murdered in Auschwitz, and all of the children who perished in the *Shoah* and proved to be an inestimable gift to the Jewish people and all humanity."

Dr. Miriam and Sheldon Adelson, long-time friends of the late Edita and Abraham Spiegel, presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to Rita Spiegel on behalf of the entire Spiegel family. Sheldon Adelson stated, "Miri and I visited Yad Vashem and the Children's Memorial in the late 1980's and were incredibly moved. Abe and Edita's unique contribution was a catalyst for us. When we returned home, I contacted Abe and we began to deepen our relationship along with our commitment to Yad Vashem. Rita has continued her family's support of the work of Yad Vashem and the maintenance of the Children's Memorial," he continued. "She demonstrated her commitment to Israel and the Jewish people through her leadership in philanthropy, education and community activities, while living in southern California and during the fourteen years she spent in Israel."

In accepting the award, Rita echoed the words that her father had spoken at the dedication of the Children's Memorial: "Inside this building is a chamber illuminated by one and a half million separate points of light. Each little light symbolizes the soul of a

Jewish child prematurely snuffed out. The mirrors reflect and multiply the lights to infinity, to remind us that not only did these children perish, but with them, their offspring, whom they



Rita Spiegel, recipient of Lifetime Achievement Award; Donna Elyassian, ASYV West Coast development staff.

would have parented. These eternal lights will not bring back all those children — those ruined lives. All it can serve is as a concrete reminder that this great evil could happen — did happen — and must never happen again."

Longtime major donors Elissa and Edward Czucker, honorary co-chairs of the evening, led the audience through a short memorial service in remembrance of the six million.

As the lights went down, and candles and stars illuminated the ballroom, Cantor Seth Ettinger of Wilshire Boulevard Temple, along with a string trio, left the audience teary-eyed with a magical performance of "We Remember Them."

Lenny Wilf returned to the stage to present the Legacy Award to Gene Simmons, who accepted the honor for himself and his mother, Holocaust survivor Flora Klein. "While achieving exceptional success in America," said Wilf, "Gene still considers Israel his home. He returned there in 2011 for the first time since leaving as a child, and has been a lifelong ardent supporter of Israel. He has been a vocal advocate for Israel in public and within the entertainment community." Gene's emotional and heartfelt response noted that the Jewish people's gift to the world, as reflected in the words of the Ten

Commandments, particularly those related to honoring thy mother and father, were critically important to him. For without the encouragement of his mother, herself a teenage survivor of Auschwitz, and her instilling in him the "will to win," he would have never achieved professional success.

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION: A PLANNED GIFT TO ASYV



Empower, educate and strengthen our future by making an endowment gift to the American Society for Yad Vashem. Your legacy will help to support Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and keep the memory of the *Shoah*, its victims, survivors and heroes alive forever.

You can make a generous contribution through a bequest in your will by designating ASYV as a beneficiary of a Charitable Remainder Trust or Charitable Gift Annuity. You can also contribute

through a life insurance or retirement plan, by naming ASYV as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy, IRA or other retirement vehicle.

Our ASYV staff are here to help you accomplish your estate planning goals.

For more information or assistance with your estate plan, please contact Chris Morton, Director of Planned Giving: cmorton@yadvashemusa.org or by phone at: 212-220-4304, extension 213.

American & International Societies for Yad Vashem
MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE
 500 FIFTH AVENUE, 42ND FLOOR
 NEW YORK, N.Y. 10110-4299
 Web site: www.yadvashemusa.org

NON-PROFIT ORG.
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 SMITHTOWN, N.Y.
 PERMIT NO. 15

Martyrdom & Resistance

Ron B. Meier, Ph.D.,
 Editor-in-Chief

Yefim Krasnyanskiy, M.A.,
 Editor

*Published Bimonthly
 by the American Society
 for Yad Vashem, Inc.
 500 Fifth Avenue, 42nd Floor
 New York, NY 10110
 (212) 220-4304

EDITORIAL BOARD

Eli Zborowski**
 Marvin Zborowski
 Mark Palmer
 Sam Skura**
 Israel Krakowski**
 William Mandell
 Sam Halpern**
 Isidore Karten**
 Norman Belfer
 Joseph Bukiet**

*1974-85, as Newsletter for the American Federation of Jewish Fighters, Camp Inmates, and Nazi Victims
 **deceased