

# MARTYRDOM & RESISTANCE



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## YAD VASHEM GLOBAL GUARDIAN OF HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

AMERICAN & INTERNATIONAL SOCIETIES FOR YAD VASHEM TRIBUTE DINNER

The American & International Societies for Yad Vashem held our 25th Anniversary Tribute Dinner on November 19, 2006 at the Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers. The over 1,200 guests, heads of major Jewish Organizations and Dignitaries who attended were inspired by the moving remarks delivered by Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, former Chief Rabbi of Israel and the current Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv. Ambassador Arye Mekel, Consul General of Israel to New York and the child of survivors, also brought greetings from the State of Israel.

The program was presided over by Dinner Co-Chairs Ira Mitzner and Marilyn Rubenstein. This year's dual theme of Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the American & International Societies for Yad Vashem and Yad Vashem as the Global Guardian of Holocaust Remembrance helped us to focus on the outstanding people who were honored at the dinner.

### “MAY YOU GO M'CHAYIL L'CHAYIL – FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.”

ELI ZBOROWSKI, Chairman, American & International Society for Yad Vashem and Recipient of the 2006 Yad Vashem Lifetime Achievement Award

Honored Guests, Dear Friends:

This is a time for me to express gratitude and give thanks. “*Shechianu, v'kimanu*, etc.

To all of you who have gathered here this evening, I say, “Thank you and a hearty “*Yasher Koach!*” for your dedication, your hard work and for a job well done!

During the past quarter century, under the umbrella of the Society, we have garnered support from individuals from all walks of life,

those that survived in concentration camps, in hiding, as partisans, and as ghetto fighters. We have also been joined by families who were not personally touched by the *Shoah*, but view remembrance as a collective Jewish responsibility. This is an evening dedicated to the celebration of our joint accomplishments. We, all of us, jointly did it, **we** made it.



Thank you, to all of you, for your continuous support in the past 25 years.

The video we have just watched tells a story none of us would have dared predict. How your generosity has enabled Yad Vashem to become the premier Holocaust institution in the world. How it has preserved the memory of the *Shoah* and its victims for future generations. Where did the spirit that drove this effort come from? From each other, from our common goals and our commitment to Remembrance.

I am privileged to share this tribute program with a distinguished couple, Dr. Miriam and Sheldon Adelson. Miri and Sheldon have lent their energy and passion to numerous philanthropic causes, both in this country and in Israel. I commend them for all that they do and tonight congratulate them for their steadfast devotion to perpetuating the legacy of the *Shoah*. The Adelsons' recent generous gift for education programs at Yad Vashem is historic not only in the amount, but as an example that calls to others to

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Dr. Miriam and Sheldon G. Adelson were presented with the Yad Vashem Remembrance award for their outstanding contributions to the cause of Remembrance. Most recently, the Adelsons donated the Museum of Holocaust Art at Yad Vashem, which exhibits art created by individuals in the darkest moments of their lives. These works of art help give us a glimpse into the inhumanity of what they saw, as well as their souls, which could not be broken.

Eli Zborowski, was presented with a Lifetime Achievement for his contributions to the cause of Holocaust Remembrance. We were reminded of all that he has done both as an individual and as the Chairman of the American & International Societies for Yad Vashem, to make sure that the world does not forget. In addition, we were able to see first-hand the contributions made to Yad Vashem by Mr. Zborowski and the Societies, which will help Yad Vashem continue to be at the forefront of Holocaust Remembrance.

### GREETINGS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Offices of the American & International Societies for Yad Vashem have received many letters from heads of state and dignitaries from around the world, congratulating them on the 25th anniversary and praising the outstanding work of the Societies as Global Guardian of Holocaust Remembrance. Below, read the quotes from some of the letters.



President Bush, in his letter to the American & International Societies for Yad Vashem, wrote “I send greetings to those gathered for the Annual Tribute Dinner of the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem. Congratulations as you celebrate your 25th anniversary.

“...I appreciate the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem for your efforts to honor the innocent lives lost and commemorate the victory of liberty over oppression. Your good work reminds others that great suffering can awaken even greater love and that we must never take freedom for granted.”

Moshe Katsav, president of the state of Israel, in his message, noted “...Yad Vashem, the Jewish people's international center for commemorating the Holocaust, fulfills a national, historic and universal role in transmitting the awareness of the Holocaust and its values, in Israel and throughout the world, especially among the young generation.”

“...Yad Vashem is the Jewish memorial voice and the commemoration site of the courage of those interned in the ghettos and camps, who bravely fought against the Nazi oppressor, and also gives expression to the appreciation of the Jewish people to the Righteous Among the Nations.”



Polish president Lech Kaczynski, in his congratulatory letter to the American & International Societies for Yad Vashem, asserted that “by working together with the Yad Vashem in Jerusalem for 25 years you have built an imposing research and educational institution in Jerusalem...By cultivating the Jewish memory and passing it on to the next generation, the Society has contributed to the creation of treasure trove of knowledge, one that has the power of not only educating but also inspiring mankind.”



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## UKRAINE COMMEMORATES NAZI MASSACRE

The presidents of Israel and Ukraine led ceremonies on September 27 for the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a devastating but often overlooked episode in the Holocaust – the killing of 34,000 Jews by Nazi forces in Ukraine over two days in 1941.

Israeli President Moshe Katsav launched the commemorations of the Babi Yar (Woman's Ravine) massacre by laying flowers at a monument that takes the form of a menorah.

"The mute voices of thousands of victims ring out from this ground," Mr Katsav said during the ceremony, in which prayers were said and chants were sung by a Moscow synagogue choir.

"We declare that we will never forgive and that this will never be repeated. We will never forget," Mr Katsav said.

A second ceremony then took place at a Soviet-era memorial that does not mention the Babi Yar victims' mainly Jewish ethnicity, for which Mr Katsav was joined



Israeli President Moshe Katsav, left, and Ukraine's President Viktor Yushchenko, during commemorative events at Babi Yar ravine in Kiev, Sept. 27, 2006

by Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko, Croatian President Stipe Mesic and Montenegrin President Filip Vujanovic.

"Humanity should read again and again about the tragedy of

Babi Yar," said Mr Yushchenko, whose father was imprisoned at the Auschwitz concentration camp during World War II.

"Time can heal our wounds, but one should not erase these pages in our memory," he said.

Later, a forum on anti-Semitism and xenophobia began in Kiev, entitled *Let My People Go*, organized by Ukrainian authorities, the World Holocaust Forum and the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial.

Nearly 34,000 Jews, many of them elderly, women and children, were driven at gunpoint to Babi Yar by German troops who told them they were to be resettled, just days after the Nazi invasion.

They were shot along the ravine's edge over two days, in what was the first systematic extermination of Ukrainian Jews.

The ravine continued to be used for executions and up to 60,000 more people – Jews, Roma, resistance fighters and Soviet prisoners of war – were killed there until 1943.

Before retreating from the advancing Red Army in 1943, Nazi troops exhumed and burned the corpses at Babi Yar in a bid to hide the atrocities.

But the secrets of Babi Yar became part of the accusations against senior Nazi officials at the Nuremberg trials, and a monument was erected in Soviet times to the memory of the victims.

However Soviet authorities tried to play down the sensitive Jewish component of Babi Yar. Anniversary gatherings were banned at the site, and there was an attempt to build a stadium there in the 1960s.

In all, some 800,000 Ukrainian Jews were killed in the war.



A Jewish man wipes tears during commemorative events at Babi Yar ravine in Kiev.

## ANTI-SEMITISM WIDESPREAD IN SWEDEN

More than a quarter of Swedes harbor anti-Semitic views, a survey found.

According to the poll issued by the Crime Prevention Agency and Living History Forum, a Holocaust-awareness group, 26 percent of Swedes believe that "Jews have major influence on the global economy" and 15 percent believe that "Jews have too much influence on the world."

Around a third of the 3,000 respondents were described as having "ambivalent" attitudes on anti-Semitism, while 59 percent said they rejected prejudice against Jews. Jewish groups in Sweden said the study shows that local anti-Semitism is a serious phenomenon that has been downplayed.

## FEMALE NAZI GUARD MARRIED TO A JEW DEPORTED FROM U.S.

An 83-year-old woman who admitted to serving as a guard at a Nazi-operated concentration camp from June of 1944 to April of 1945 was deported to Germany. The woman, Elfriede Rinkel, said she was not a member of the Nazi party, just did its bidding, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Rinkel was told she must leave the United States on or before September 30 and that she could never come back again. She left on September 1.

Her late husband, Fred Rinkel, was himself a German Jew who left Germany because of the Holocaust. Rinkel's relatives said neither they nor her husband knew of her past.

Rinkel said she worked with an SS-trained attack dog but said she never used the dog as a weapon against the prisoners and never forced them into morning marches to work or die.

Of a 100 completed cases of Nazi persecutors who lied so they could live in the United States, Rinkel is the only woman who was caught and deported.

## OSLO OPENS HOLOCAUST STUDY CENTER

A mansion used by the Norwegian Nazi collaborator Vidkun Quisling has been turned into a Holocaust research center in the capital Oslo.

After World War II "Quisling" became synonymous with "traitor".

The center's work will focus on the Nazi genocide of millions of Jews, but will also examine the persecution of other minorities.

More than 750 of Norway's Jews, who numbered about 1,800 before the war, died in the Holocaust.

"There is a huge symbolism here", said the center's director Odd-Bjorn Fure.

He believes the centre will shed new light on Norwegian complicity in deporting many of the country's Jews during

the war.

Mr. Fure says the Quisling puppet government was planning to deport the country's Romany people, as well. Researchers at the center will look into this issue.

When German troops invaded Norway in 1940, Quisling proclaimed himself "Minister President," and moved into Villa Grande with his wife in 1941. He was executed in 1945.

The idea of turning the mansion into a Holocaust center came from Bjoern Egge, who was a Norwegian soldier during the Nazi invasion, and spent some time with deported Jews during his three years as a prisoner of war in *Sachsenhausen*, Germany.



Villa Grande: Quisling's house is a symbol of the occupation.

## TATTOOS REUNITE HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

Shmuel Tzuk and Josef Shvyatovich met as teenagers in Poland's *Shanyov* concentration camp in 1943.

Within months, they were shipped to Auschwitz and separated, each assuming the other had died. As it happened, both immigrated to Israel.

The two were recently reunited in Israel when Tzuk's wife, Hannah, met

Shvyatovich and noticed that the Auschwitz tattoo on his arm was numerically close to her husband's.

A tearful meeting followed.

"I am a little excited after so many years," Shvyatovich, now 83, told Ma'ariv. "We were between life and death, and our meeting now is more than family."

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC HONORED AS UNSUNG HERO DURING HOLOCAUST

In September, borough officials gathered at Queensborough Community College for the unveiling of a Holocaust exhibit honoring an unsung hero of World War II: the Dominican Republic.

The Harriet and Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center at the college officially opened its new exhibit, "Sosua, Refuge from the Holocaust in the Tropics," which pays tribute to the compassion and generosity showed by the Caribbean nation during the war.

Dominican Republic was one of the few countries to offer a safe haven for refugees fleeing persecution in Germany

and Austria.

Given the fierce fighting in Europe, it was difficult for refugees to reach the island, and only about 700 were able to make it to the Dominican Republic, where they thrived in the coastal community of Sosua.

Queensborough Community College President Eduardo Marti said that the story of Sosua is an important one and should never be forgotten.

"The courage demonstrated by the people of the Dominican Republic during this difficult period of time should be applauded and recognized," he said.

## WWII EUTHANASIA VICTIMS FOUND IN MASS GRAVE

The skeletons of 20 children and five adults believed to be victims of the Nazi euthanasia program have been found in a mass grave in western Germany.

The bones of 20 children were discovered during excavation work at a cemetery in the German town of Menden, close to where a World War II hospital run by Hitler's personal physician, Karl Brandt, was located.

The children, aged from one to seven years, were found alongside the bodies of five adults.

Investigations of two of the children's skulls indicated the victims might have been handicapped.

The prosecutor's office in the nearby city of Dortmund said there were indications the deaths might be related to euthanasia, which was secretly practiced by the Nazis from 1939 to 1941. Some 70,000 people with physical or intellectual disabilities perished in the euthanasia program, which the Nazis believed was necessary to cleanse the German people of racially unsound elements.

Those who were deemed "unworthy to live" by showing symptoms of mental retardation or physical handicap were sent to the so-called killing facilities, where they were murdered by lethal injections or exposure to carbon monoxide gas.

The Nazi euthanasia program, which became an open secret in the Third Reich, was officially terminated in 1941 in the wake of protests from members of the German clergy. The practice, however, clandestinely continued until the end of World War II with an ever-wider range of victims, which included geriatric patients, bombing victims and forced laborers. Karl Brandt, who was in charge of the program, was executed for war crimes in 1948.

## RESURGENCE OF ANTI-SEMITISM IN AMERICAN MEDIA

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), an American media watch group, claims that the mainstream press in the US has not only failed to cover "increasing anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish sentiment in many places around the globe," but has also been complacent in allowing "anti-Jewish outbursts" from many of its commentators.

The FAIR report cites various anti-Semitic comments from nationally-syndicated radio and television commentators and their guests. These included Don Imus of MSNBC, who called the book publishers Simon & Schuster "thieving Jews" on his popular radio show; Bill O'Reilly of Fox News, who told a Jewish caller to his radio show to "go to Israel" if he was upset about "Christmas going into the schools;" and Bill Donohue, Catholic League president and guest on MSNBC's Scarborough Country, who claimed that "Hollywood is controlled by secular Jews who hate Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular."

The recent resurgence in anti-Semitic comments by mainstream commentators and guests is attributed to "an aggressive form of religious nationalism" that has gained momentum since the re-election of George Bush last November. This religious nationalist movement, according to FAIR, is seeking out a scapegoat to serve a powerful conservative mandate.

## AUSTRIA LAUNCHES INTERNET DATABASE FOR ARTWORK LOOTED DURING NAZI ERA

Austria has launched an online database to find the owners of art items that may have been looted under Nazi regime and are in some of the country's museums.

The National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism, set up by the Austrian government in 1995, compiled a databank of looted art on the internet that is now accessible at [www.kunstrestitution.at](http://www.kunstrestitution.at).

It contains several thousand objects of art that are in the possession of state-run museums, galleries and other official institutions but which are considered to have been expropriated between 1938 and 1945, when Austria became a part of Nazi Germany.

A virtual catalogue, organized in sections such as prints, painting or furniture, facilitates the search for stolen objects that are described in great detail, often with photos. The location of the object and the institution in charge of it are also listed.

The National Fund was tasked with investigating the origin of art of uncertain origin owned by the state or official institutions, clarifying questions of ownership

and examining possible restitution to the owner of their heirs.

The origins of some of the items are still in question and it remains to be determined if they were looted.

According to Austrian law, art looted by the Nazis shall be returned to the original owners or to their legal successors. However, the law doesn't automatically establish a claim and only opens the possibility for the government to return the object, Juergen Schremser, spokesman for the Fund, said.

The database is only available in German. An English version is expected to be online in 2007.

While Austria had been initially very reluctant to tackle the restitution of looted art, the issue gained momentum with the case of Maria Altmann, who fought many years for the return of several paintings by Art Nouveau painter Gustav Klimt.

Altmann, who currently lives in Los Angeles, has been deemed the rightful heir of five Klimt paintings, among them a world-famous portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer, Altmann's aunt, that were on display at the Austrian Gallery in Vienna.

## POLISH RIGHTEOUS GENTILE WOMAN RECOMMENDED FOR NOBEL PRIZE

Holocaust survivor groups here have joined the recommendation of the Polish president, Lech Kaczynski, to award the Nobel Peace Prize to 96-year-old Irena Sandler.

Sandler, who was a member of the Polish underground group *Zegota* that was dedicated to saving Jews, was recognized by the Yad Vashem Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Authority in 1965 for smuggling numerous Jewish children out of the Warsaw Ghetto.

The children received false papers and were either adopted by Christian families or sent to convents. Sandler, however, recorded the real names of 2,500 children on lists that were placed in glass jars and

buried, with the hope that the youngsters would eventually be returned to their families. The Gestapo arrested Sandler in October 1943. Despite being tortured, she refused to reveal the children's identity, and was sentenced to death by a Nazi court. The underground group freed her, and she lived in hiding under an assumed identity until the end of the war.

If Sandler, who still lives in Poland, is chosen for the Nobel award, it would be the first time the honor would be bestowed to a righteous Gentile.

Joining the campaign on behalf of Sandler are the Israel-Poland Friendship Association and the Lublin and Polish survivors' organizations.

## HUNGARIAN NUN SAVING JEWS BEATIFIED

Sara Salkahazi, a Hungarian nun who saved the lives of dozens of Jews during the last year of World War Two, was beatified in Budapest.

A journalist, writer and cultural activist by profession, Salkahazi joined the Sisters of Social Service, a charity organization and religious order helping the poor, in 1929. The Sisters of Social Service saved over 1,000 Jews, including many women and children, in the final and hardest months of the Second World War. Of them, around one hundred were aided by Salkahazi herself.

After her mission was reported to the authorities, the henchmen of the ruling Arrow Cross, the Hungarian allies of the Nazis, drove her along with people she sheltered to the Danube and shot them

into the river on December 27, 1944. The beatification ceremony was the first in Hungary since 1083, when the country's first king, St. Stephen, his son, St. Imre, as well as St. Gellert, a bishop who played a key role in converting Magyars to Christianity, were beatified and canonized.



Sara Salkahazi

The Hungarian Holocaust claimed the lives of 550,000 to 600,000 Jews and tens of thousands of Roma.

## HOLOCAUST CENTER GETS A DONATION AND A NEW NAME

The Holocaust Resource Center and Archives at Queensborough Community College has told the story of the Holocaust, for more 23 years, through the survivors.

Survivors had handed over hundreds of their photos, letters and family heirlooms all with a unique narrative, adding to the bigger story. Those distinct narratives will now have an even louder voice in the story with help from Queens resident, Harriet Kupferberg, and a generous donation of \$1 million in the name of Harriet and her late husband, Kenneth Kupferberg.

In September, the current center was renamed the *Harriet and Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives*, and was dedicated to the philanthropist Queens couple.

"Over the last 100 years, from the Armenian genocide in 1915 to the events in Darfur today, genocide has been a part of the world we live in," said Dr. Eduardo J. Martí, President of Queensborough Community College. "Nothing like the Holocaust has occurred in human history. The Kupferberg Center demonstrates our

commitment to learning the lessons of the Holocaust."

The renamed Kupferberg Center, the only educational center of its kind in New York City, will house an exclusive body of materials, programs, exhibits and historical information on the Holocaust and other instances of genocide.

Besides telling the story of the Holocaust through unique exhibits developed by scholars, it also provides extensive teaching and learning materials for use in schools around the nation.

The renamed center will be housed in a new, 7,000-square-foot permanent home and is scheduled to open in the spring of 2008, reflecting the theme, "Let There Be Light." Martí said the new building will be a "unique architectural statement," featuring dramatic use of glass to symbolize awareness, hope and the lasting memory of those who were victims of the Holocaust.

The Queensborough Community College Fund is in the midst of a \$5 million fundraising drive to secure the ongoing operation of the Center.

## A LIFE DEDICATED TO HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE AND EDUCATION

Sigmund Strochlitz, a Holocaust survivor and internationally recognized peace advocate, died October 16, 2006, at the age of 89 in New London, Conn. He was one of the three founders of the American Society for Yad Vashem, serving as one of its founding Vice Chairman. He was currently serving as the Society's National Vice Chairman of Connecticut, and has always been a strong supporter of Yad Vashem and of Holocaust education. He was a recipient of the Elie Weisel Remembrance award, and has spoken extensively about the Holocaust on all educational levels.

Sigmund Strochlitz was born in Bendzin, Poland, in 1917. Until the outbreak of World War II, he attended the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. His parents, sisters and wife were killed in Birkenau. He himself survived imprisonment in several concentration camps, including the death camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, and in April 1945, he was liberated, along with his future wife, Rose Grinberg, in the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen in Germany.



Sigmund Strochlitz

Sigmund and Rose married shortly after the war. They adopted Rose's orphaned niece, Halina, and their daughter, Romana, was born in July 1946 in the displaced persons camp at Bergen-Belsen. The family came to the United States in 1951 and initially lived in New York City before moving to New London, Connecticut, where in 1957, Sigmund founded Whaling City Ford. The Strochlitz family also includes two adopted sons, Jaime Strochlitz-Wurzel of Newton, Mass, and Rafael Strochlitz-Wurzel of New Britain, Connecticut.

A committed Zionist, Mr. Strochlitz was a supporter of numerous institutions in Israel. In the early 1980's, Sigmund took a leading role in organizing official Holocaust observances in every state of the union. His mandate for this mission came from the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, to which he was first appointed by President Jimmy Carter and to which he was later reappointed by President Ronald Reagan. He has received numerous awards for his community and national service, including honorary doctorates from four universities.

In 1992, President George H.W. Bush appointed Strochlitz to the Presidential Commission on the Preservation of Americans' Heritage Abroad, and in 1993, French President Francois Mitterand appointed him a Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters of the French Republic. He also was a past recipient of the National Holocaust Remembrance Tribute and the Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

Strochlitz's lifelong passion was his Holocaust remembrance work. He was a leading member of numerous national Holocaust remembrance organizations. He served as vice president of the Rose and Sigmund Strochlitz Holocaust Resource Center of the Jewish Federation of Eastern Connecticut, was co-chairman of the National Campaign to Remember and chairman of the National Committee Responsible for Annual Holocaust Commemoration Ceremonies at the White House. Connecticut College and Bar-Ilan University both awarded Strochlitz honorary doctorates.

His daughter Romana Strochlitz Primus, serves as a Board member,

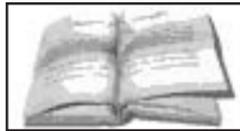
Executive Committee Member, and is Chair of the Education Committee of the American Society for Yad Vashem. She honors the heroic life of her dear parents z'l, and has also devoted much of her life to Holocaust remembrance and educa-



Elie Wiesel gives a eulogy for Sigmund Strochlitz at Congregation Beth El in New London.

tion. Romana and her husband Charles have four adult children and four grandchildren.

Sigmund Strochlitz was deeply committed to Holocaust remembrance and education and perpetuating the memory of the Six Million. He was a strong supporter of Zionist and other Jewish causes. His wife Rose died in 2001. He is survived by four children, 14 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren in the United States and Israel.



# BOOK REVIEWS

## POLAND, A GREEN COUNTRY

Poland, A Green Country. By Aharon Appelfeld. Keter, Jerusalem, 2005. 217 pp.

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

Aharon Appelfeld, Israel's most renowned and prolific Holocaust author, who himself is a survivor, offers us in his most recent book the best fruits yet of his remarkable talent in recapturing the themes of the complex and convoluted Holocaust tragedy, masterfully utilizing both fact and fiction.

This time, Appelfeld focuses on a Jacob Fine, Israeli son of survivors, who feels compelled to return to his parents' hometown in a small Polish village to better understand his family and reconnect to his roots. Fine, a businessman and an ex-officer in the Israeli Army encounters a rural Polish setting that has not changed much since the war and before it. He experiences a quasi-mystic sense of belonging to a place where his family had lived for centuries, with the aid of an embracing peasant woman of simple, though profound, religiosity who knew his family, and in whose home he lodges, falling in love with her during his eventful visit.

Fine soon encounters the suspicion of the villagers, leery of the stranger who may be after Jewish property left behind, as well as looted following the murder of the Jews by the Germans, and the refusal of the Poles to help the desperate Jews who had done much for the collective welfare for so long. Anti-Semitism still remains a powerful force, even in the absence of Jews, as Fine's Jewish identity, separate from his Israeli one, grows in response to the deep-seated and irrational hostility born of the theological rejection and envy of Jewish accomplishments.

Fine's transformative return to his ancestral heritage from which he was paradoxically alienated in Israel, is epitomized in his futile attempt to purchase and bring to Israel the broken Jewish tombstones used by the Poles as pavement. He even dreams of his past Israeli soldiers under his command protecting him from the threatening Poles who endangered his life. A high price is required by the village's council for what it ironically claims is a treasured possession reflecting a significant bond with its past honored Jews.

Fine's following observation is a haunting one: "Poland is a cemetery that was ploughed. It is hard to pray in such a cemetery. The fertile green is maddening. I truly tried, but it was beyond my strength."

Rabbi Israel Zoberman, spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach, is son of Polish Holocaust survivors.



## PERSONALIZING THE PERPETRATORS

The Dachau Defendants: Life Stories from Testimony and Documents of the War Crimes Prosecutions. By Fern Overbey Hilton. McFarland and Company, 2004. 201pp. \$35.00. Paperback.

REVIEWED BY CAROLINE SHARPLES

The oft-repeated cry when reflecting upon the Holocaust is one of just how was this possible? What could possibly induce human beings to participate in the genocide of millions? What sort of people were behind the crimes of the Third Reich?

The question of perpetrator mentality has already prompted much historical research. In his 1996 work, *Those Were The Days* (the title of which stemmed from a caption inscribed in Kurt Franz's photograph album from his time as Commandant of the Treblinka extermination camp), Ernst Klee offered insights into this mindset through a compilation of letters, diaries and reports from perpetrators and bystanders. The material was notable for its frequently cool and detached depiction of atrocities. More recently, Robert Gellately published a collection of interviews with the Nuremberg defendants carried out at the time by the American psychiatrist Leon Goldensohn. These interviews focus on the personal lives of some of the biggest names of the Nazi regime, examining their initial attraction to National Socialism, as well as their responses to the Holocaust. Goldensohn himself, it seems, deliberately set out to explore whether any peculiar character defects or unusual experiences might have rendered these figures more disposed to participating in such activities.

He questioned them intensely about their childhood development, family relationships, sexual proclivities and whether they had known any sadistic types among their Nazi colleagues. The mid-1990s were characterized by the Browning-Goldhagen debate as to whether the criminals of the Third Reich should be viewed as "ordinary men" or "ordinary Germans." Both scholars examined the actions of Police Battalion 101—a unit largely made up of educated, middle-class and middle-aged men. In the debate, much was made of man's ability to commit crimes against his fellow man; discussion focused on the erosion of moral boundaries under Nazism and whether opportunities existed to defy orders within a dictatorship at war.

Against this background comes Fern Overbey-Hilton's latest work.

Between 1945 and 1947, the Americans staged a total of 489 war crimes trials at the former administration building of Dachau concentration camp. 1,700 individuals were prosecuted under these proceedings, which encompassed a range of atrocities committed in what was now the American occupation zone of the newly-divided Germany. These included crimes perpetrated in the concentration camps or during the death marches, as well as the mistreatment and murder of downed American airmen.

Overbey-Hilton does not attempt to focus on the legal side of these events. No detailed discussion is made here of the tri-

als themselves or the wider denazification process, and, indeed, many accounts of the war crimes trials conducted during this period are already available. Instead, Overbey-Hilton focuses on the nature of the people who came before the court, the

sort of lives they lived prior to the rise of National Socialism, and how they came to be in a position to engage in criminal activity during the Second World War.

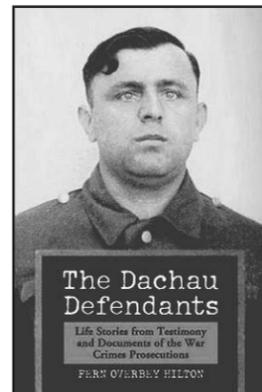
The accused themselves certainly came from all walks of life, ranging from major ideologically-committed Nazis, to well-educated professional types (teachers, doctors, engineers) or even "ordinary" villagers. There is,

of course, no room in a slim paperback for the author to tackle all 489 trials. In selecting which cases to include, Overbey-Hilton claims to have opted for those which "lend themselves to an understanding of the trials" and those which "have something to teach us about World War II-era Germany and the tragedy that grew out of the German culture of that time."

The book itself is divided into seventeen chapters, the last of which aims to provide some form of concluding analysis under the rhetorical heading, "Will we ever learn?" and spans just over three pages.

Indeed, the book as a whole is fairly concise. The majority of chapters focus on just one or two defendants at a time and, on average, run the course of nine pages.

(Continued on page 15)



## FASHIONING WOMEN IN THE THIRD REICH

Nazi Chic? Fashioning Women in the Third Reich. By Irene Guenther. Berg, New York, 2004. 499 pp. \$28.95. Softcover

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

Theoretically, the Nazi system was meant to impact every aspect of German life: political, economic, social, and cultural. Indeed, countless books have examined the political, economic, and social tenets and manifestations of Nazism in Germany. Far fewer, though, have examined cultural issues, exceptionally revealing and thought-provoking in their own right, affected by and affecting the aforementioned. Thus, Irene Guenther's volume entitled, *Nazi Chic? Fashioning Women in the Third Reich*, is a particularly unique, fascinating, and important contribution.

Put simply, in Guenther's work, we learn about Nazi Germany's propagandist attempts to create a "German fashion" for its women and hence, concomitantly and interestingly, fashion their role in Nazi society. One style especially favored was the dimid "Tracht traditional folk costume" worn by Nazism's "female ideal": the German farmer's wife. Referred to as "Mother Germany" and considered "the 'life spring' of the national community, the Volk," it was felt that the German farmer's wife instinctively knew that a woman's highest calling was that of wife and mother. She knew that "Kinder, Küche, and Kirche (children, kitchen, and church)"

were most important. She paid no attention to the foolish antics of the "New Woman" interested in Paris styles, make-up, and so much more "dangerous" to the stability and existence of the family and the "Fatherland." Yes, she fit perfectly into Nazism's worldview, and most particularly how they saw the primary role of women: child-bearing.

A kind of "urban alternative" "fashioning proposal" offered the German woman was "the German female in uniform." Here, Nazism's obsessive love of "organization and militarization," its "demand for unity, uniformity, commonality, and community" was "visibly expressed." And the opportunities to appear in uniform were many, beginning in childhood. First, girls were members of the "Bund deutscher Mädel (BdM), or the League of German Girls," graduating through its various age specific subdivisions. Then, they moved on to membership in the "Labor Service for Female Youth (RADwJ)" organization. Still, ultimately, everything they learned in both these organizations was to make them better wives and, especially, mothers,

their primary role vis-à-vis Nazi society.

Interestingly, while uniformed women would come to be in the German armed services, that was never a Nazi goal. Rather, it was the result of need: as the war progressed, there just weren't enough German servicemen.

So, why should all this interest readers of M&R?

The following excerpt, originally part of an article on women's fashion from the SS newspaper *Das Schwarze Korps* (1939), alludes to the fascinating reason—itsself in a strange way reminiscent of Hitler's wild ravings as regards Jews and the German woman in his book *Mein Kampf*:

"The female beauty ideal is no longer determined by the beauty of the mother and the comrade of the man, but rather, more or less hidden, by the whore..."

This whole development was one of the masterstrokes of the Jewish infection that still plagues us today. The entire Aryan world has been captured and infected by this Jewish spirit."

In sum, many Nazis held that the Jews, most specifically in the women's fashion industry in Germany, were responsible for what they viewed as the calculated, malicious "degeneration" and "degradation" of the German woman, body and soul. According to them, it was the Jews who were responsible for the "trashy" appearance and continuing popularity of the

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# HOLOCAUST KIN LAST LINK TO PAST

BY JORDAN LITE

Growing up, Dan Brooks never attached the weight of the word "legacy" to the stories his grandparents told him about their escape from the Nazis.

But as Holocaust survivors live out their last days, attention is increasingly focused on their grandchildren, who will be the last living link to their stories.

Dubbed the "third generation," some of these young Jews are shaking off the survivor identity they were once assumed to have inherited. But they continue to absorb its emotional pull.

"I've been introduced as a third-generation survivor and I'll cringe," said Brooks, 28. "Legacy" is a very loaded word.

Though early research suggested survivors' descendants also experienced Holocaust trauma, psychologists have moved away from characterizing grandkids the way they did their parents.

Paul Lantos once mimicked his parents' approach to the Holocaust: He shunned books and movies about the subject, believing they would be too painful to absorb. He hated hearing German spoken and wouldn't consider buying a Volkswagen.

But by the time he got to college, he sensed he was removed enough from his grandparents' horrors to no longer feel like a victim himself.

"I took a lot of ownership of the pain I

saw in my grandparents. My perspective has changed a little bit. I know full well I am not a survivor," said Lantos, 31.

A group Brooks founded last year, A3GNY, grew out of his own feeling of alienation from the second generation, who he said were focused on working through their relationships with their survivor parents. Brooks and the 400 members of his group want to preserve their families' stories, educate children who might not know survivors, and in some cases, connect to a history that may feel unfamiliar, despite being a Holocaust descendant.

Still, consciously or not, they mourn their grandparents' suffering, and "one way they find meaning is to connect" to the Holocaust, said New York psychologist Eva Fogelman.

A protest against the genocide in Sudan turned out a strong contingent of Holocaust survivors' grandchildren, who felt a visceral pull toward the tragedy.

They also are twice as likely to enter medical and social service professions as American Jews whose grandparents did not experience the Holocaust, Fogelman said.

Lantos, who conducts medical research in poor countries, said he is motivated by the tales his grandfather told him during childhood walks, when the older man would recall being tortured in slave-labor

camps and stealing potatoes to survive.

"I feel like my obligation is to be humanitarian," said Lantos, who lives in Brookline, Mass.

That the third generation sees their grandparents not as victims but as heroes to emulate sometimes leads to clashes with their own parents, said Julia Chaitin, who has studied three generations of survivor families.

Caroline Weinberg, 23, doesn't remember exactly when she was told her grandmother, Sala Garncarz, survived a series of Nazi labor camps. Yet Weinberg read Holocaust literature obsessively as a girl and sobbed through a diary Garncarz kept in the camps, imagining herself in her grandmother's shoes.

The depth of their connection crystallized when Weinberg's mother, Ann Kirschner, told her that letters Garncarz had hidden during her years in the camps would be exhibited at the New York Public Library last spring.

For Kirschner, who had been starved most of her life for details of Garncarz's imprisonment, the letters were "historical," Weinberg said. But she saw them as "personal documents" and felt protective about sharing them. "It really became a family to-do," she said, adding that she

and her mother eventually agreed the letters should be donated.

The third generation's bond with their grandparents is ultimately the completion of a long healing and understanding process for families.

When Werner Greenbaum, now 84, and his wife were raising their children, the memory of the Holocaust was fresh.

"You didn't like to talk about it," said Greenbaum of Fresh Meadows, Queens, who fled Germany after the Gestapo burned down a Frankfurt synagogue and secret police forced him to clean up their destruction of the Rothschild Museum on *Kristallnacht*.

Like many survivors, Greenbaum had felt comfortable only speaking English to his children. Yet he was delighted when his grandchildren, Arielle, 23, and David, 27, both learned German.

It also was at Arielle and David's urging that all three generations traveled to the survivors' birthplace in Germany.

"I never understood what they experienced until my children nudged them," said Greenbaum's daughter, Judy Cahill.

In their storytelling, it was as if her grandparents were exhaling, Arielle said.

"That was a defining moment for me. I felt like, wow, almost like I've come full circle," she said. "They were helping document what happened to them. They were passing it on."

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Werner Greenbaum's searing memories of the Holocaust live on in his granddaughter Ariel.

## PROFILE IN COURAGE

February 1943, Bulgaria agreed to Germany's request that it hand over 20,000 Jews. In March, Bulgarian authorities arrested more than 11,000 Jews living in its newly annexed territories, and German army units deported them to Treblinka. Because the Bulgarian government had not met the quota of 20,000, it decided to deport Jews of Bulgarian citizenship, namely the 8,000 living in the town of Kjustendil near the Macedonian border. Word of the plan spread and angered many of the non-Jewish residents. A delegation of Bulgarians boarded a train for Sophia to protest the deportation. They were hoping to enlist the support of Dimitar Peshev, the deputy speaker of the Bulgarian parliament.

Although he had supported Bulgaria's anti-Jewish laws, Peshev had done so because he knew it would strengthen his country's alliance with Germany. He never supported the deportation of Bulgaria's Jews. He, too, wanted to stop it. On March 9, 1943, he brought the Kjustendil

delegation, along with several parliament members, to meet with the Minister of the Interior, Petur Gabrovski. Gabrovski denied knowing about the plan, but they knew he was lying and demanded

that he cancel the deportation. After a lengthy argument, Gabrovski agreed to do so. Peshev knew, however, that the Jews were not out of danger.

On March 17, 1943, Peshev wrote a letter to Prime Minister Bogdan Filov in which he opposed any future deportations of Bulgarian Jews. He convinced 42 of his colleagues in parliament to sign the petition and presented it to the



Dimitar Peshev is featured in Poster Set on Rescue.

prime minister. Filov was furious that Peshev organized such a public protest. The parliament voted to remove Peshev from his position as deputy speaker. Soon thereafter, Alexander Belev, the Bulgarian official in charge of the government's Jewish policy, launched a plan to deport all of the nearly 50,000 Bulgarian Jews to Poland.

Although Peshev felt defeated, his actions caused others to intensify their protests. Leaders of the Bulgarian church sent letters to the prime minister and to King Boris III. Prominent writers and intellectuals spoke out, as did groups of lawyers, physicians, and communists. This collective pressure led King Boris III to alter his policy. Despite competing pressure from the Germans, he prevented the deportations by having many Bulgarian Jews assigned to forced labor units in Bulgaria. As a result, no Jews of Bulgarian citizenship were sent to their deaths in Poland.

Dimitar Peshev passed away in 1973.

## JEWISH REMAINS FOUND IN UKRAINE MASS GRAVE

Hundreds of Jewish skeletons were uncovered in a mass grave in a Ukraine forest next to the city of Lvov.

In September, a secret mission called "Kaddish for Ukraine's Jews" began looking for the mass graves of Ukrainian Jews who were massacred during the Second World War.

In an operation initiated by the Jewish Congress and the Holocaust Museum in Paris and Washington, the delegation uncovered an enormous mass grave in a forest in Ukraine containing remains of hundreds of Jews murdered in the time of the Holocaust. The remains were uncovered in one of the 500 sites the delegation members are planning on excavating.

The operation initiators contacted

priests and elderly residents in Ukraine and asked for assistance in locating potential sites where thousands of Jews may have been murdered and buried in mass graves.

The delegation members began examining areas around Lvov located in western Ukraine. Before the Second World War, about 110,000 Jews lived in Lvov, and with Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in June of 1941, this city and the surrounding area was one of the first ones that were invaded.

Among the members of the delegation were a pathologist, several archeologists, local rabbis and eight Zaka Rescue and Recovery members, including organization Chairman Yehuda Meshi Zahav and

his son, Shimon.

"One of the sites that the elderly told us about was in a small village next to Lvov, where there is a forest next to a Jewish cemetery," said the members of Zaka. "We used metal detectors to locate the exact area by detecting the bullets."

"The metal detectors went off exactly in that area. They began digging, and two meters down, the remains began to surface. Hundreds of skulls and bare skeletons were counted in the grave site. The years in which the bullets were manufactured were engraved on the bullets recovered from the remains – 1941, 1939 – as well as the country in which they were manufactured – Germany.

Meshi Zahav said that most of the skele-

tons were children. "We know that as opposed to Gypsies, the Nazis also killed the Jewish families along with their children," he said.

The delegation members estimated that in this mass grave alone some 1,800 Jews were buried. They said that after the grave was uncovered, Ukrainian authorities agreed to recognize the area as a Jewish burial site, and a religious burial ceremony was organized with the participation of a rabbi from Lvov.

The delegation members are planning on returning to the area and erect a monument in memory of the victims. The delegation will return to Ukraine in order to uncover other burial sites of Jews killed by the Nazis.

# SURVIVORS' CORNER

## “THE HIGHEST HONOR OF THE BEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD”

When the White House called Corporal Tibor “Ted” Rubin to tell him he was to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor, he thought it was one of his friends playing a joke. President Bush has called the 76-year-old Korean War veteran “one of the greatest Jewish soldiers America has ever known.” But Ted is characteristically modest. “I was just a country boy,” he told me, “but next week I’ll be honored with the country’s highest award. This is unbelievable.”

Being awarded the Medal of Honor is another of a series of adventures in Ted Rubin’s remarkable life. He was born in Hungary in 1929, and at age 15 was sent to Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria. His first day there an SS captain told the assembled, “None of you will get out of here alive.” Ted turned to the man next to him and said, “Nice fellow.” Ted survived the next 14 brutal months of captivity, but most of his family perished. His father died in Buchenwald. His ten-year-old sister Elonja was sent to the gas chambers at Auschwitz, and his mother Rosa, who was slated for forced labor, chose instead to face death with her daughter. Mauthausen was liberated by the U.S. 11th Armored Division on May 5, 1945. With nothing left for him in Hungary Ted emigrated to the United States. He promised himself that he would show his

appreciation to the country that gave him his freedom, and saved his life.

Ted joined the Army in February 1950, and five months later landed in Korea with the 3rd battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, one of the first American units sent to help repel North Korean invasion forces. Ted was soon involved in the fighting withdrawal to the Pusan perimeter. In one engagement near Chirye, Ted’s company was redeploying from one hill to another, and he volunteered to stay behind to keep the enemy guessing until the movement was completed. As Corporal Leonard Hamm relates, “the North Koreans, thinking the hill was still occupied by a whole company, made an all out offensive with all their available troops. PFC Tibor Rubin had stocked each foxhole with grenades, and during the attack the following morning made his way running from foxhole to foxhole, lobbing, one after the other, grenades down upon the enemy, he became almost hysterical in his actions but he held the hill.”

For this and other actions, Ted’s imme-

diately superiors recommended him for the Medal of Honor. However, before the paperwork could be processed, these officers were killed, and a sergeant who might have sent the papers up refused to do so because Ted was Jewish. “Not on my watch,” he said. After the Inchon invasion, the 8th Cavalry Regiment moved north towards the Chinese border, and was at the forward edge of the U.N. offensive when the Chinese Red Army entered the conflict. Ted’s battalion was destroyed at the Battle of Unsan in early November 1950, while fighting a delaying action against Chinese forces swarming south from the Yalu. Hundreds of Americans were captured, among them Ted, who had manned a machine gun to hold off the enemy as the rest of the unit attempted to withdraw.

Ted found himself in the Pukchin POW camp, also known as “Death Valley,” and later at Pyoktong, along with hundreds of Americans, Turks, and others. The camps were at first run by the North Koreans, then by the Chinese, whom Ted said treated them slightly better. Nevertheless, life

was nightmarish for the prisoners. They were cold and hungry, and disease was rampant. “Healthy men became like babies, helpless,” Ted said. “Everything was stink, death, it was terrible, terrible.” 30-40 a day were dying. “It was hardest on the Americans, who were not used to this,” Ted said. “But I had a heck of a basic training from the Germans.”

Ted used all the experience he had gained as a Holocaust survivor in helping to keep himself and other prisoners alive. “I did it because I was an American,” Ted told me, “and because it was a mitzvah. Regardless of color or nationality, they were my brothers.” Food was vital for survival, so he began to steal rations from the enemy, who had little enough themselves. Fellow POW Sergeant Carl McClendon stated, “every day, when it got dark, and we went to sleep, Rubin was on his way, crawling on his stomach, jumping over fences, breaking in supply houses, while the guns were looking down on him. He tied the bottom of his fatigue pants and filled up anything he could get a hold of. He crawled back and distributed the food that he had stolen and risked his life.”

Ted also did what he could to treat the sick and injured. But many were beyond saving, and diseases such as dysentery

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### HOLOCAUST VICTIMS TO GET MILLIONS MORE FROM INSURER

An Italian insurance giant will pay tens of millions of additional dollars to the heirs of Holocaust victims who once held policies with the company, according to settlement papers filed in three class actions against *Assicurazioni Generali* in U.S. District Court in Manhattan.

The settlement calls on the company to pay the claims currently pending before a London-based commission set up to deal with Holocaust-era insurance claims. The \$100 million *Generali* gave to the commission, called ICHEIC, in 2000 has already been exhausted and additional claims remain, according to the settlement agreement.

The settlement will also allow victims and their heirs to submit new claims directly to the company through February 2007.

Although the settlement agreement does not say how much money *Generali* will have to pay to settle the new and existing claims, two sources close to the case said more than \$25 million will likely be needed to cover them. The agreement also allows for the lawyers involved to inspect *Generali*’s old records, a source said.

*Generali* still faces more than 20 Holocaust-related lawsuits brought by individual plaintiffs and one class-action lawsuit that has not yet been certified, a source close to the case said. The 25-page settlement agreement stipulates that if more than 300 claimants decide to opt out of the settlement, *Generali* can back out as well.

According to the agreement, *Generali* will also pay up to \$3.25 million in attorney fees and extra fees to several of plaintiffs.

## HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS MEET AFTER SIXTY-TWO YEARS

BY RENE BRUEMMER

When they were 11 years old, childhood friends Esther Grauer and Tova Weiszner survived a six-month death march.

They then spent three years together during the Second World War in a prison in the occupied Ukraine, then part of the Soviet Union, begging food from villagers to survive.

They lost touch after the war but trod similar paths, settling in Canada and raising families.

About 20 years ago, a support organization for Holocaust survivors put them in touch, but they hadn’t seen each other in person since not long after they left prison.

Sixty-two years, five children, seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren later, the survivors were reunited at Trudeau airport.

“Do you have a Valium? I can’t believe I forgot my Valium,” Grauer, 77, exclaimed moments before the reunion, to no avail.

“I don’t want to make a scene.”

But there was no scene. Only glistening eyes, throats choked with emotion and the silent embrace of friends who have experienced too much and haven’t seen each other since 1944.

“I have no words,” said Weiszner, 76. “There are no words. I am speechless.”

Friends since Grade 2 at their Hebrew elementary school in Lipcani, Romania (now a part of Moldova), Grauer and Weiszner and their families were among

more than 1,000 Jews forced from their homes in 1941 by Germany’s Nazis and the Romanian army, marching for six months until they reached the prison barracks in the occupied Ukraine in which they would live for three years. Those who couldn’t walk any longer or disobeyed were shot.

Grauer arrived with her mother and



Second World War survivors Tova Weiszner (left) and Esther Grauer are reunited at Pierre Elliott Trudeau airport.

younger sister, Weiszner with her father, pregnant mother and brother.

“It wasn’t a four-star hotel,” Weiszner said. “We slept on the cement floor; there were no beds or even mattresses. And there was no food.”

They would sneak under the barbed wire before dawn (“If the soldiers saw us, they would shoot us.”) and beg from villagers who risked their lives to help them.

Grauer remembers melting snow for water in prison. For food, she rinsed potato skins discarded by the German and Romanian guards.

Bodies of the dead were carried out daily. Weiszner’s parents and her newborn sibling would be among them, ultimately succumbing to typhus and malnutrition. Disease and lice were rampant because prisoners were not allowed to bathe.

“Imagine not having a shower for three years,” Weiszner said.

Weiszner’s and Grauer’s parents heard of a new law protecting young prisoners with no parents, and they made the children pose as orphans, so they would be sent to orphanages back in Romania. Grauer eventually reunited with her mother and sister; Weiszner never saw her parents again.

The friends last saw each other in Bucharest in 1944. Separately, both travelled to Israel in the late ‘40s, married and had children.

“I’ve been lucky,” said the diminutive Weiszner, who has a comedian’s delivery and credits her vitality to “keeping busy – I don’t just sit on the couch.”

“I’ve had a good life, I have good children – they’re healthy, they’re not in prison.”

Her one regret, however, is that she and Grauer took so long to see each other. Yes, Winnipeg is far, but it’s not like they had to walk, Weiszner said.

Grauer feels the same way.

Friends fortunate enough to have survived the Holocaust and who live in the same country have an obligation to see each other, Grauer noted.

“We were happy to survive, but you never forget. ... When you’re that young, it leaves an imprint forever.”

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# SERBIAN HOLOCAUST

BY CARL SAVICH

Following the Axis bombardment of Belgrade on April 6, 1941, the Nazi occupation of Serbia began, which immediately targeted the Jewish population. The Gestapo introduced anti-Jewish measures only days after entering Belgrade, with the objective "of settling the Jewish issue." Belgrade Jews were conscripted by German occupation forces to remove and to clear the debris and rubble following the Axis bombing of the city. Concentration camps were set up for Serbs, Jews, and Roma in German-occupied Yugoslavia. Serbia and Banat were under direct German military occupation. SS *Gruppenfuhrer* Harald Turner was the head of the German Military Occupation Administration in Serbia.

The German occupation forces began the immediate implementation of anti-Jewish measures. SS *Gruppenfuhrer* Turner, described as "a fanatical National-Socialist and anti-Semite," was determined to implement what would become the "Final Solution."

The destruction of the Jews of Serbia occurred in four stages. In the first stage, from April to August, 1941, the German occupation forces compiled lists of Jewish residents of Belgrade. Jews were forced to wear yellow badges or ribbons. Mass arrests of Jews ensued. Jews were dismissed from public offices and



The Belgrade Synagogue which the German occupation forces desecrated by removing the Star of David and using as a brothel.

the service sector. The German occupation forces put on street cars: "For Jews Forbidden (*Fur Juden verboten*)" along with a "V for victory" sign.

On July 28, 1941, the German occupation forces announced a curfew against Jews in a decree or order of the command in Belgrade, *Kommandanturbefehl, Naredba Komande Beograda*, in both German and Serbian: "Since the current urbanization plan is being endangered by criminal activity, it is necessary to establish a curfew for Jews in the city." The curfew began at 8 pm on Monday through Friday, and at 7 pm on Saturday and Sunday.

Jewish-owned businesses had to be closed at the time of the curfew. If the Belgrade Jews did not comply, further restrictions would be established. Many Jews were conscripted for enforced labor. Other Jews were killed as hostages. Groups of Jews were executed as reprisals for the activities of the resistance groups in Belgrade. Other Jews were shot as individuals.

The concentration camp of *Topovske Supe*, a former weapons depot, was established in August, 1941 to serve as a

transit camp. The *Topovske Supe* camp was set up by German occupation forces as a temporary assembly point for the Jews of *Banat*, a region of Serbia, then under direct German military occupation and administration. From here, Jews and Roma were sent to the death camps at *Sajmiste* and *Banjica*.

In the second stage, from August to October, 1941, all Jewish males over the age of fourteen were interned.

In the third stage, from October to December, 1941, almost all Jewish males were killed.

On December 12, 1941, Jewish women and children were interned in the *Sajmiste* camp. The commander of the *Sajmiste* camp was the Austrian SS-*Untersturmfuhrer* Herbert Andorfer who used mobile gas vans to kill approximately 7,500 Jewish prisoners, mostly women. The murders continued until May, 1942. Andorfer was tried in West Germany and sentenced in January, 1962 to two-and-a-half year's imprisonment.

In the fourth stage, from January to May, 1942, all Jewish men who remained and all the interned women and children were killed. Belgrade had a pre-war Jewish population of 11,870, 10,500 of whom were killed during the German occupation.

First appeared on [serbianna.com](http://serbianna.com)

## OFFICIALS WARN OF RISING ANTI-SEMITISM

Hundreds of people gathered in the southern Polish city of Kielce July 4 to remember the victims of Poland's worst post-WWII pogrom, and were urged to stop any resurgence of anti-Semitism.

The wail of a siren cutting through the warm summer air signaled the start of a solemn ceremony in front of a white and grey stone monument to more than 40 Jews, who were mercilessly slaughtered here 60 years ago.

Kielce erupted in a frenzy of hatred after a rumor was spread that a Jewish family had held a Christian boy in a cellar overnight. The rumor soon turned into anti-Semitic hysteria, with tales that Jews needed to have blood transfusions from Christian children to survive or used Christian blood to make matzos. The Kielce pogrom happened a year after the end of WWII, in which six million Jews died in the Holocaust, more than half of them from the country's once-vibrant Jewish community.

In the months following the massacre, up to the end of 1946, almost 150,000 Jews left Poland. Many of them went to Palestine to take part in building their new homeland. They knew that only a sovereign Jewish state can guarantee their safety," Israeli ambassador to Poland David Peleg said.

Polish President Lech Kaczynski called the Kielce pogrom an unjustifiable and shameful crime.

"This was a huge dishonor for Poles and a tragedy for the few Jews who survived the Nazi Holocaust," he said in a message read out at the ceremony in his absence. "Nothing can justify this crime. In a free, democratic Poland that upholds the law, there is no place for racism and anti-Semitism, which are met with justified repulsion," he said.

# DISTORTING JEWISH HISTORY

BY SHARON LAPKIN

Sixty years ago, Nazism massacred six million Jews in Europe. But anti-Semitism didn't begin with Adolf Hitler. Judeophobia has been an affliction of Western civilization since the Roman historian Tacitus maligned the Israelites in the first century of the Common Era.

In 1267 in Vienna, The Catholic Council decreed that all Jews had to wear *pileum cornutum* or horned hats, so the public could identify them as offspring of the devil. And half a century earlier the Council of Paris forbade Christian midwives to attend Jewish women, who they proclaimed, were bringing the brood of the Devil into the world.

The Archbishop of Canterbury closed every synagogue in his diocese in 1282, and eight years later, King Edward I expelled the remaining 17,000 Jews from England and stole their property. They fled to Europe, but most were thrown into the sea by order of the ships' captains.

In Russia in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century, Jews were routinely tortured and put on trial for alleged blood-drinking. Later, they were burned alive in pogroms, as the public were warned to hide their children from the vampire Jews who sought to kidnap them and drink their blood at Passover.

Throughout history, Jews have been referred to as dogs. When Martin Luther designed his eight-point plan to rid the world of Jews in 1543, he demanded, "They must be driven from our country" and "we must drive them out like mad dogs."

In the mid-nineteenth century, leading French writer, Leon Bloy wrote, "It is impossible to earn the esteem of a dog if one does not feel an instinctive disgust for the synagogue." And in 1871, Pope Pius XI said in reference to Jews, "of these dogs, there are too many of them at present in Rome, and we hear them howling in the streets, and they are disturbing us in all places."

Almost five hundred years after Martin Luther published his pamphlet, *On the Jews and their Lies*, a three-year-old Palestinian toddler articulated ageless Jew hatred in a new context in 2005, when she explained to a large Arab television audience on the *Iqra* network that Jews were "dogs" and "villains."

As the world acknowledged the first "International Day of Commemoration of the Victims of the Holocaust" on 27 January, the Iranian mission to the UN released an official response to the "day," and the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* obtained a copy.

This document called for "scientific scrutiny and rigor" to determine the "veracity of the Nazi genocide against European Jewry." It accused Israel of "massacres" and "acts of state terrorism" and stated that "The basic principle of democracy ... should pave the way for exploring different aspects of historical events without any arbitrary restriction." And it ended with a warning that, "genocide and immense suffering should not be manipulated for political purposes."

A few days earlier, Iran announced it was organizing a conference to examine the "scientific evidence for the Holocaust."

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad recently called the slaughter of six million Jews in the Holocaust a "myth" and declared Israel should be "wiped off the map."

Israel's Ambassador to the UN, Dan Gillerman, warned the world body, that the Iranian President's hostility and Holocaust denial was a "real threat of future genocide." The Iranian President, he said, represents an "evil regime" that "denies the Holocaust while preparing for the next one."

Gillerman went on to state he "terribly regretted that the State of Israel did not exist in 1938 or 1943", because if it had, the Holocaust "would never have happened...And I warn you," he said, "there will forever be an Israel, so this horror will never be witnessed again."

But Hitler was not the first to massacre large numbers of Jews, nor was he the most recent. He merely pioneered the killing machine that processed the hatred of fourteen hundred years of anti-Semitism before him. As new threats emerge and demand the destruction of Israel, it is vitally important that Jewish history not be defined by isolated events such as the Holocaust and the conflict with the Palestinians.

Western teaching trends in high schools and universities now include teaching history through interpretive methods, such as computer simulation. One such teaching activity was recently introduced into seven Australian schools and a university, where students were required to role-play the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, to enable them to "gain an insight into all sides of the

argument." After several Jewish students complained, the NSW Department of Education investigated and revealed that the simulation was "heavily biased against Israel." The schools have dropped the programme, but Macquarie University – which developed the activity – has refused to stop.

As history teaching morphs into indoctrination through role-play and computer simulation – which simultaneously de-emphasize historical facts and dates – it is essential that Jewish history be remembered in its entirety. And that it not be reduced to computer graphics where students are required to pretend to be an "Invader Jew" in order to pass a history exam. The motto, so oft repeated "Never Again," can only be properly understood if it retains its context.

Dr. Dagobert Runes, revered peer of Albert Einstein and renowned Jewish scholar, said in 1968, that "the wearing of the yellow spot, the burning of Jewish books, and finally the burning of the people..." was learned and practiced well before Hitler. Prior to Nazism, he claimed, Jews were burned alive. At least, he said, Hitler gassed his victims before he burned them.

Nor did the massacre of Jews cease with the defeat of Nazism in the Second World War. The Kielce Pogrom in Poland, in 1946, saw Jewish Holocaust survivors being lured out of their homes by neighbors who spent five hours publicly murdering them in cold blood as the local government and church stood silently by. This event – almost two years after the

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# YAD VASHEM GLOBAL GUARDIAN AMERICAN & INTERNATIONAL SOCIETIES



Eli Zborowski, Chairman, American & International Societies for Yad Vashem and Recipient of the 2006 Yad Vashem Lifetime Achievement Award, Sheldon G. Adelson, Recipient of the Yad Vashem Remembrance Award, Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, Guest Speaker.



Eli Zborowski, Chairman, American & International Societies for Yad Vashem and Recipient of the 2006 Yad Vashem Lifetime Achievement Award with Dr. Miriam Adelson, Recipient of the Yad Vashem Achievement Award.



Marvin Zborowski, Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, Guest Speaker and Eli Zborowski, Chairman, American & International Societies for Yad Vashem and Recipient of the 2006 Yad Vashem Lifetime Achievement Award.



Picture of some of the more than 1200 people who attended the American & International Societies for Yad Vashem 25th Anniversary Tribute Dinner.



Barry Rubenstein, Marilyn Rubenstein Dinner Co-Chair, and Eli Zborowski, Chairman, American & International Societies for Yad Vashem and Recipient of the 2006 Yad Vashem Lifetime Achievement Award.



Ariel Zborowski, Eli Zborowski, Chairman, American & International Societies for Yad Vashem and Recipient of the 2006 Yad Vashem Lifetime Achievement Award, Sheldon G. Adelson, Recipient of the Yad Vashem Remembrance Award, Dr. Miriam Adelson, Recipient of the Yad Vashem Achievement Award, Elizabeth Zborowski and Murry Zborowski.



Eli Zborowski, Recipient of the Yad Vashem Lifetime Achievement Award.



Marvin Zborowski, Recipient of the Yad Vashem Lifetime Achievement Award.



Sheldon G. Adelson, Recipient of the Yad Vashem Remembrance Award.

# MAN OF HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE SOCIETIES FOR YAD VASHEM TRIBUTE DINNER



Chairman, American & International Societies for Yad Vashem and Recipient of the 2006 Yad Vashem Lifetime Achievement Award, Elizabeth Zborowski, and Elizabeth and Joseph Wilf.



Sam and Stella Skura, Elizabeth Zborowski and Eli Zborowski, Chairman, American & International Societies for Yad Vashem and Recipient of the 2006 Yad Vashem Lifetime Achievement Award.



Zborowski, H.E. Krzysztof Kasprzyk, Consul General of Poland, Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, Speaker and Eli Zborowski Chairman, American & International Societies for Yad Vashem and Recipient of the 2006 Yad Vashem Lifetime Achievement Award, Elizabeth Zborowski and Fanya Heller.



Mindy Mitzner and Ira Mitzner, Dinner Co-Chair.



Edmond G. Adelson and Dr. Miriam Adelson, Recipients of the Yad Vashem Remembrance Award, Marvin and Celina Zborowski and Eli Zborowski Chairman, American & International Societies for Yad Vashem and Recipient of the 2006 Yad Vashem Lifetime Achievement Award.



Lawrence and Adina Burian and Caroline Massel, Co-President of the American Society for Yad Vashem Young Leadership Associates and Morris Massel.



# REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

## KIN REUNITED SIXTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER HOLOCAUST

BY ARON HELLER, AP

Hilda Shlick thought she lost nearly all her family in the Holocaust — until her Internet-savvy grandsons located her 81-year-old brother in Canada.

After 65 years, I have found the sister who I love," Simon Glasberg said in heavily accented English, his eyes filling with tears. "I can't stop kissing her."

Using the database of Holocaust victims at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial, two of Shlick's grandchildren, Benny and David, began unearthing a mystery spanning six decades and three continents.

While improved technology in recent years has made the task of tracking Holocaust survivors easier, fewer and fewer survivors remain as each year passes.

Scanning the database, the grandsons, both in their 20s, discovered an entry erroneously stating their grandmother had perished half a century earlier. That entry led them to other surviving relatives, who eventually brought about the siblings' emotional reunion.

When Glasberg, who lives near Ottawa, Canada, saw his gray-haired little sister for the first time, he recognized her immediately, he said.



Simon Glasberg, 81, of Ottawa, Canada, left, hugs his sister Hilda Shlick, 75, from Ashdod, Israel, during their meeting at the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum in Jerusalem.

"I felt I couldn't talk. I just cried," he said. "You don't understand, 65 years ..." His voice trailed off.

Shlick, 75, said she too was overwhelmed by the discovery.

"For 65 years, I lived thinking I had no family besides one sister," she said.

Since reunion, the family bond has clearly been re-established, with the two elderly siblings playfully joking and reminiscing in a hearty mixture of Russian and Yiddish. Their large families have quickly become close.

The last time the two saw each other was in 1941, when the Glasberg family of Chernowitz, Romania, was separated after the Nazis invaded.

Hilda, then 10, escaped to Uzbekistan with her older sister Bertha. The rest of the family — parents Henia and Benzion, and brothers Simon, Mark, Karol and

Eddie — stayed in Romania, finding refuge in a basement. The fate of one sister, Pepi, remains unknown. She disappeared and is presumed to have been killed by the Nazis.

Glasberg, his brothers and parents emigrated to Canada after the war ended. Shlick and her sister moved to Estonia, where Bertha died in 1970.

In 1998, Shlick immigrated to Israel. During a family conversation this summer, her grandsons learned her maiden name was Glasberg, and they began to investigate her past.

They logged onto the Yad Vashem Web site and found a page of testimony submitted in 1999 by her brother Karol, of Montreal, who wrote about his sister Hilda, who "perished in the Shoah."

Karol died that same year, but further searches through the Web site of the Montreal Burial Society and online forums of survivors of Chernowitz, Shlick's grandsons were able to track down his son, who filled in the picture of what happened to the divided family.

Shlick's parents died in the 1980s in Montreal, living well into their 90s, as did her brother Eddie, who died in 2004.

Mark Glasberg lives in Ottawa, but was

too ill to travel to Israel to meet his sister. His son Irving, however, lives in Israel, just half an hour away from his missing relatives.

Shlick said she plans to travel to Canada soon to see her other relatives and visit the graves of the parents she lost as a child.

Yad Vashem director Avner Shalev said the story should encourage Jews from around the world to check the database for their relatives' names and to submit pages of testimony for those who have been lost.

The database contains some 3 million names of Holocaust victims and has been visited by 10 million people since it went online in 2004.

Yad Vashem spokeswoman Estee Yaari said

this was only the second known case of living siblings discovering each other through the database. Last June, two sisters who had survived the Holocaust and moved separately to Israel were reunited after 61 years.

Glasberg, though thrilled to find his sister, said the reunion was bittersweet because of all the years the family was divided.

"My poor parents, they always said, 'We wish we would find all our kids'" he said. "It is such a tragedy, but now I am so happy."



Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev gives Hilda and Simon Glasberg a tour of the Hall of Names at Yad Vashem

## POLAND WORKS WITH YAD VASHEM TO IDENTIFY "RIGHTEOUS" POLES

The Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw (IPN) has had a general cooperation agreement with the Yad Vashem in Jerusalem since 2004. Now, the Israeli institute studying crimes of the Holocaust has promised to officially assist it in gathering archive documents about Poles who lost their life, or suffered repression for helping Jews during the Second World War.

The latest visit by representatives of the Polish institution to Jerusalem has set the scene for official bilateral cooperation in scientific research and the exchange of archive documents relating to the period of World War Two. Mateusz Szpytna, one of the members of the delegation, says cooperation to date between IPN and Yad Vashem was based on archive research conducted by individual historians studying aspects of Polish-Jewish relations. The present agreement opens an entirely new chapter in relations with Yad Vashem, he says.

"We want this process to be more institutionalized and better organized. We are starting research on help extended to Jews by Poles during World War Two. There will be two parallel programs. The first one is to complete a register of Poles repressed by the Nazis for their assistance to Jews. This is where we are strongly counting on cooperation with Yad Vashem. The second will aim at an inven-

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## A RIGHTEOUS FAMILY IS HONORED AFTER SIXTY YEARS

BY ETGAR LEFKOVITS

For four decades, Ben Hulata, 81, had lost contact with the Dutch family that saved him and his younger brother during World War II.

Then last year, the octogenarian was suddenly struck with pangs of conscience and remorse for "not doing enough" to thank the Christian Dutch family for their heroism.

Determined to set the record straight and see them rightfully recognized, he set out to find the family that had saved his own life, and that of his younger brother more than 60 years ago.

In the summer of 1943, Hulata, born Ben Monnikendam, was 18 when he decided to flee Amsterdam together with his 16-year-old brother Yitzhak after being put in touch, via a female classmate, with a member of the Dutch underground named Luke.

Just two years earlier, their older brother had been deported to the Mauthausen concentration camp where he was murdered by the Nazis.

As the persecution of the Jews intensified in the Dutch capital, the two brothers escaped, and hid on a farm in eastern Holland, where they paid rent to the farmers.

In the meantime, their parents, who had chosen to remain in Amsterdam, were caught and sent to their deaths in Auschwitz in October 1943.

Soon enough, the brothers' money ran out, but their contact in the Dutch underground transferred them to a family farm in *Varsseveld*, a small Dutch vil-



In the Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations: standing on the left Elbert Colenbrander; fourth from right, Johan Colenbrander; center, standing, Yitzhak Hulata; third from right, Ben Hulata.

lage near the German border.

The farm belonged to the Colenbrander family. The head of the household, Bernard Colenbrander, who was active in the Dutch resistance, lived

on the farm with his wife, Hendrika, their 11 children, and a grandfather.

The two Jewish brothers were offered shelter at the farm even though Bernard Colenbrander had been imprisoned in the Vught camp in the south of Holland for resisting the regime and on suspicion of hiding Jews.

Colenbrander's son, Elbert, then 21, was in charge of finding alternate hiding places for the Jewish siblings on the family farm both before and after his father's detention.

Despite the already-heightened risk to the family, the two brothers were given Dutch names and hidden in a small room above the pigsty of the farm, along with two British pilots, with all their needs looked after by the family during their one-year stay.

Over the course of that year, Elbert Colenbrander would bring two additional Jews to the farm, and take care of them as well.

Near the end of the war, a group of German soldiers arrived on the family farm, taking over part of it for their own use.

Despite the heightened risk to their lives, the Colenbranders continued to sequester the Jews, and provide them with food when the German soldiers were out.

Ben and Yitzhak Hulata remained at the farm until they were liberated in 1945.

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## “MAY YOU GO M'CHAYIL L'CHAYIL – FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.”

(Continued from page 1)

follow in that sacred work of Remembrance.

The staff of the American Society has worked tirelessly for months to make this event a success. To them I offer my sincere and heartfelt gratitude. My wife Elizabeth, a child survivor, lent her commitment, talent and inspiration to the production of my video and to the creation of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition, which is displayed in the reception area. Elizabeth, thank you for your diligence and for embracing our mission.

The Torah teaches us, “*v'higadetah l'vincha*” – and you shall tell your children. My children grew up with the burden of the Holocaust. They grew up with stories of hardship, of cruelty, of loss and devastation, but they also learned about kindness and sacrifice, because both my late wife Diana and I were saved by Christians who risked their lives to shelter us during the war. It has, perhaps, been a difficult burden for our children to shoulder, but they have done so with understanding and compassion. To my children and grandchildren, I say, “Thank you for your caring, your concern, your commitment to *Yiddishkeit* and the perpetuation of Jewish memory.

For almost six decades, until her death in 2004, Diana was my sounding board, my advisor and my partner in all my communal endeavors. She was beloved and respected by all those whose lives she touched. It is

our hope that the Diana Zborowski *Shoah* Aftermath Research and Education Center at Yad Vashem will record the phenomenal rebirth in this period, and that it will teach future generations to confront and overcome adversity.

“*V'al achron, achron choviv*” – And last but not least, I profoundly thank Yad Vashem for the privilege of providing us, the survivors, and our friends outside of Israel an opportunity to partner with you in creating and expanding an institution which has become the Global Guardian of Holocaust Remembrance.

The Society has been blessed with many active members among the second and third generation, who now hold key leadership positions in our organization. They are *the future*, they already carry and they *will* continue to carry the torch of Remembrance and the commitment to Yad Vashem into the next generations. Their activities, which demonstrate their devotion to our mission, are extensively recorded in this year's Journal. I am sure you will find this material interesting and heartwarming.

As the light is slowly fading in our tent, I am confident that it will be brightly rekindled anew in our children's and grandchildren's generation. To the incoming leadership, I say: “May you go *m'chayil l'chayil* – from strength to strength.”

Thank you.



### THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM YOUNG LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATES

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## AN UNEXPECTED HAVEN

At recent ceremonies in memory of the Jews who were interned in a camp in *Calabria* during World War II, the town of *Tarsia* named a street after Rabbi Riccardo Pacifici, who was part of the camp's history.

Yellow signs on the motorways in Italy signal places of special interest - this one reads “*Ferramonti di Tarsia*.” It is no church or villa or castle but something much rarer in Italy: it is the site of a World War II concentration camp for Jews. *Ferramonti* is almost unique in another sense, not only in Italy but in the whole of continental Europe. It was a camp which actually became a haven for the internees, a place where they could avoid the horrors of the German concentration camps.

In September 1943, units of the Fifth British Infantry Division and the Eleventh Canadian Tank Regiment of the Eighth Army liberated *Ferramonti* as they advanced northward through *Calabria*. This was the first Axis internment camp to be liberated by the Allies, and the biggest Italian one. There were 2,000 inmates, most of them Jews from Germany and central Europe. But it could hardly have been more different from the ones which were to follow.

Mussolini had passed anti-Jewish laws in 1938 and began interning foreign Jews as soon as war broke out. The first “*Ferramontini*” were Germans, Austrians and Czechs, most of whom had left their own countries after discriminatory laws had been passed there. The camp was built on low-lying ground near the river *Crati*, 30 miles north of *Cosenza* in *Calabria*, deep in Italy's toe. From the

Italians' point of view of security it was a perfect setting - miles away from anywhere, no military installations, no important roads or railways, and impervious mountains all around. But isolation and malaria apart, conditions were far from harsh. From the beginning the Italians allowed internees to regulate the life of the camp.

Very soon there was a synagogue and school, an infirmary and a kosher butcher. Contacts with the locals flourished. Domenico Zazzaro, who was thirteen in 1940, still lives within spitting distance of the camp. He remembers, “There was a Czech who came every day to buy milk. He used to take manure as well from the cowsheds for their vegetable plots.” But the contacts were not just practical and down-to-earth. Culture too was exchanged.

Viennese painter Michel Fingsten continued his work in what became known as the “studio-hut,” and one of his canvases, a large *Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew*, is today the altarpiece in a nearby church. This was not the only ecumenical touch. Obviously, there was no Jewish cemetery in *Tarsia*, as the Jews were expelled from southern Italy in the 16th century. So inmates who died in the camp, and there were not many, were buried in the Christian graveyard a couple of miles from the camp. It is strange to see

tombs with Hebrew inscriptions among the cypresses, with very non-*Calabrian* names and birthplaces: “Rosa Freidmann, born in Dobropole, 24 October 1879,” “Max Mannheim, born in Mosciski, 23 September 1897.” That is, apart from one: “Leo Wellesz, born 2 January 1943 at *Ferramonti*, died 4 April 1943.” Little Leo was an exception, though. Other babies born in the camp survived, and the first one was even given the name “Benito” in honor of Mussolini. Professor Benito Erlich is now a consultant in an Israeli hospital.

In time, two other synagogues were added to cope with religious differences; there were three levels of schooling (with foreign languages taught from the elementary level, a piece of progress which only reached other *Calabrian* schools in the 1990s), and a library with thousands of volumes. There were debates and plays, football matches, chess tournaments and literary competitions. One German Jew told Lord Rennel of the Allied Control Commission immediately after liberation, “The Italians could not be cruel, because even if they tried they would be so inefficient that we could get round it.”

Right from the beginning, regulations were relaxed; there were supposed to be three roll calls a day. Very soon they were reduced to two, then one and then normally every two days - the unpronounceable foreign names were more than the

*Carabinieri* could cope with.

In March 1942, the camp commandant was explicit in his policy when he told a visitor, “The internees can do what they want as long as appearances are kept up and I don't get into trouble with the Ministry.” In practice, *Ferramonti* turned out to be the salvation of the Jews interned there. They spent up to three years there (while sharing the sufferings of the general population, especially cold, malaria and insufficient food). But they were saved from deportation to Germany. It was, given the circumstances in the rest of Europe, in some respects an idyll. Many *Ferramontini* stayed in Italy after the war. One even remained in *Cosenza*, where he founded the town's only publishing house. Others stayed in Italy in Rome or Milan.

The *Ferramonti* Foundation was started in the 1980s by *Calabrian* pediatrician Spartaco Capogreco. Twenty years ago or so, Capogreco, who is neither Jewish nor even from *Cosenza*, “discovered” *Ferramonti* and was shocked that it was not part of the local memory. Since then he has written a book about *Ferramonti*, started the foundation and worked indefatigably to put *Ferramonti* on the map, as part of Italy's history and as an important positive episode in the *Shoah*. One of his successes was to persuade the Ministry of Transport to put *Ferramonti* literally on the map by giving it a yellow motorway sign. Last year he finally succeeded in having the site legally protected by the Ministry of Culture, though it was too late to prevent the destruction of one of the last remaining huts.

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# SURVIVOR CAMPAIGNS TO HONOR TOWN THAT HID HER FAMILY FROM NAZIS

BY ENID WEISS

Marina Lowi Zinn has never forgotten the small Italian town or the people there who sheltered her and her family from the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Her South Plainfield home is decorated with photographs and paintings of Gandino, the town where the Lowi family hid, along with posters from modern-day Holocaust commemoration ceremonies held in Gandino. The town, nestled in the countryside near Milan, now has a population of about 5,000.

Zinn and her husband, Ralph, have spent years collecting newspaper clippings, letters, and other documents — both old and new — and sending them on to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Israel. In 2005, six residents of Gandino directly involved in hiding her family — Vincenzo Rudelli, Bortolo and Battistina Ongaro, Francesco and Maria Nodari, and Giovanni Servalli — were honored as Righteous Among the Nations.

Zinn also spearheaded an effort in coordination with the National Italian American Foundation in 1995 to plant trees in Israel in memory of those six Righteous Gentiles. But, said Zinn, all those efforts were not enough; she wants the entire town recognized.

"They deserve it — everybody knew [Jews] were hiding, but nobody gave us away," Zinn said in an interview. She was in Gandino in 2000 when the Yad Vashem honor was conferred; the event was in the newspapers there, she said, and has been "every year since then, even though there are no Jews in Gandino."

"Gandino remembers its Jews; why can't Jews remember Gandino?" said Zinn.

Zinn said she's been told by Yad Vashem officials that there isn't enough documentation to honor the entire town's population as Righteous Gentiles. She's frustrated because nearly everyone in the small town knew there were Jews hiding there, and most even knew her family, yet no one sold them out.

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Anti-Semitism wasn't originally part of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini's political platform; some Jews even joined his Fascist Party. Italy allied itself with Germany and Japan in 1937, and the Italian dictator adopted Nazi racial laws in 1938 and stepped up anti-Semitic measures in 1940 when it entered World War II.

In 1942, Lowi, her parents, and brother were living in Milan when her father arranged to smuggle his two children out of Italy to Belgium in a florist's truck. But the children got the measles and couldn't go. They were in hiding with their mother when her father was deported to Auschwitz, where he was killed.

They made their way north, out of Milan, to a small house in the countryside near Gandino in the foothills of the Alps.

Giovanni Servalli provided six-year-old Zinn and her brother with false papers. The siblings masqueraded as Christian children under the name Carnazzi.

"My mother met lots of nice people," Zinn said.

She continued, "I was having a good time in the mountains — the fresh air. But winter was coming, and we heard that German Nazis and Italian fascists had begun conducting raids of homes in the area. They were looking for Jews."

Fearful that they would be discovered, the family left their hiding place in the countryside and moved in with a family in Gandino. That house was partially hidden by a large rock and lacked heat and running water.

It was so cold in the winter, said Zinn, that her mother went to a nearby convent and the siblings were moved to a Catholic

boarding school.

"I still have the yellow and white fabric with my school number. My mother came to visit us during the off-hours, but she always came during my piano lessons. One day the piano teacher became suspicious and asked,

'Are you Jewish?'"

Lowi said that at the time she didn't know it, but found out after the war that there were other Jewish children being sheltered at the school.

The Lowi children hid at the school less than a full school year before they had to move again. The mother superior at the school was the only one who could be trusted with their identity, and she discovered that German officials were investigating area convents and schools, looking for Jewish children.



Marina Lowi Zinn in her home in New Jersey

## DNA KEY TO FINDING VICTIMS OF HOLOCAUST

BY KENDRA MARR

Forensic tools used to identify victims of the Sept. 11 attacks and the December 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami could help reunite families of an older tragedy — the Holocaust.

DNA Shoah is the brainchild of Syd Mandelbaum, a retired geneticist and the child of two Holocaust survivors. Part science, part community service, part detective work, its goal is to create a genetic database of people who lost family during the Holocaust, identify the remains of Holocaust victims and bring together living relatives.

"It's never too late for healing to happen, even if it is a few generations down the line," said Mandelbaum's daughter Bari, a 31-year-old Santa Clara nutritionist who will be leading a grass-roots campaign to build the database.

She hopes to reach out to synagogues, Jewish student centers and Jewish agencies throughout the West Coast. But the project is not confined to the Jewish community; it's also open to others who lost relatives in the genocide that killed an estimated 9 million to 11 million people, including Poles, Gypsies, gays, trade unionists and the disabled.

DNA Shoah plans to collect DNA samples from survivors and their families, as well as from Holocaust-era remains as they continue to surface in Poland, Germany and other parts of Europe.

They need to act quickly, said Michael Hammer, a geneticist at the University of

Arizona and co-director of the project. There are 300,000 concentration camp survivors left, with an average age of 68, as well as roughly 10,000 Holocaust orphans who were sent to safety in the United States, Canada and England during World War II; many of them lost touch with their families.

"It didn't take much convincing for me to want to participate," Hammer said. "There's a window of opportunity to do this. We have the technology, and generations of survivors are aging. If we don't do it now, it can't ever be done."

Pnina Levermore, executive director of the Climate of Trust Council, an organization that works with Jewish Russian immigrants living in the Bay Area, said it's a compelling idea.

"People would be thrilled at the possibility of finding long-lost relatives they didn't know they have," she said. But she added that sending samples of DNA to a database raises privacy issues that will need to be addressed.

Hammer said DNA Shoah will keep genetic information confidential and ensure anonymity by identifying DNA samples with bar codes, rather than names.

Each person has a unique "genetic fingerprint" distinguished by a pattern of DNA markers. Since children get half their markers from each parent, the more genetic material that is available, the better chance of finding a match to distant relatives.

This type of analysis has improved as a

result of lessons learned from recent mass casualties.

When fires in the World Trade Center degraded the remains of victims to the point that standard DNA "fingerprinting" methods were useless, examiners turned to another method. It examines mitochondrial DNA, found in the energy-producing parts of cells, which is much more resilient and abundant than the nuclear DNA involved in inheritance.

DNA Shoah faces a similar problem. After 60 years underground, the DNA in Holocaust remains — especially broken bones — almost certainly has degraded.

In the Indian Ocean tsunami, waves washed away items such as toothbrushes that could have provided clues to unidentified bodies. Software developed by Gene Codes, a "bioinformatics" firm based in Michigan, provided ways of matching victims with distant relatives.

Gene Codes has donated its software to handle DNA Shoah's anticipated hundreds of thousands of genetic samples.

It was the discovery of an unidentified mass grave that inspired Mandelbaum, a 56-year-old New Yorker, to create DNA Shoah in November.

Mandelbaum said he read an article about remains in Germany that were believed to be connected to the Holocaust. He contacted Israeli police and Israel's Holocaust museum to confirm the suspicion, but no one was able to identify the remains, and the bodies were reburied.

"It bothered me," he said. "I have a missing grandfather. If someone ever

In 1943, Italy made peace with the Allies, and the Allies occupied parts of the country, while Germany took control of other parts. The Nazis then hunted down Italian Jews, eventually deporting more than 7,000 to concentration camps.

The Lowi and the Ongaro families became close and the children played together, she recalled. To this day, Zinn and one of the Ongaro children keep in touch — writing letters and talking on the telephone. The Lowis lived quietly, posing as Christians until, one day, the Nazis arrived.

"We were small but we knew we couldn't tell them we were Jewish," said Zinn, who still remembers the day vividly. She and her brother also had to make sure they did not let on that they understood German. "The Nazis went through the house and storage room. They kicked the luggage looking for ammunition."

Luckily the suitcases didn't open because that's where the family stored their Hebrew books, she said. The Nazis also uncovered a small sewing box her mother had purchased as a birthday present for her.

Zinn said, "She gave it to me then, saying, 'Who knows how long we'll be alive.'"

By the time the war ended, 26 families had helped hide the Lowis and other Jewish families. And every time the Nazis came looking for Jews, no one from the town helped them, she said.

Zinn said, "Not one Jew was arrested from that town."

After the war, the Lowi family returned to Milan.

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found his remains, I would love to have the option to give him a decent burial and put him in a place where we could honor his memory."

Mandelbaum is perhaps best known as the founder of *Rock and Wrap it Up!*, an international non-profit organization that gathers food left over from rock concerts and other performances and distributes it to the hungry.

In 1994 Mandelbaum was involved in DNA tests to determine whether Anna Anderson was the long-lost Grand Duchess Anastasia of Russia. The tests, on strands of hair, refuted her claim.

Now, Mandelbaum is back to doing DNA detective work.

The plan is simple. DNA sampling kits will be sent to families around the world who want to participate. Participants rub swabs along their inner cheeks to collect cells. Each swab is placed in a tube and mailed off to Hammer's lab in Arizona for DNA fingerprinting.

The university will absorb most of the lab costs, and Mandelbaum is starting to raise money for sampling kits and other essentials. The costs of DNA fingerprinting have gone down, he said, making such a large-scale project possible.

A lot of Holocaust work is "vitaly important, but also brutal," Bari Mandelbaum said. "This project not only lets us remember the past, but it lets us move toward the future. We're bringing together families and laying bodies to rest."

First published in *Mercury News*

# SHOAH RESCUERS HAVE MORAL HONOR, BUT IN POLAND THEY LACK BASIC NEEDS

BY DINAH A. SPRITZER

Marysia Ambrozy has participated in a lot of events honoring those who helped Jews during the Holocaust, but a recent ceremony in Wroclaw, Poland, made her cry for all the wrong reasons.

In May, two elderly sisters were recognized by Yad Vashem for helping their impoverished parents feed, house and hide nine Jews during the Holocaust.

At the awards ceremony, Ambrozy, a cultural assistant at the Israeli Embassy in Warsaw, overheard a newspaper interview with the sisters, who were in their early teens at the time of their parents' act of valor.

"They said that they don't need a medal and they don't care about it," she said, adding that the sisters said that "what they need is money. The journalist was asking them, 'Don't you think that you did a great thing?' And they answered — 'Our stupid mother was helping and never got anything for this.'"

The sisters' bitterness is perhaps a rare phenomenon, she noted, but it illustrates some of the problems Righteous Gentiles, as they're called, and their heirs have in Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. They tend to be from poorer areas, since it was easier to hide Jews in rural villages during the war than in cities.

Ambrozy explained that after World War II ended, the sisters' mother was physically attacked by neighbors for helping Jews. The sisters' father died of cancer after the family was too poor to pay for his medical treatment.

The sisters sought financial aid for their family from Jewish organizations, but were unsuccessful, according to Ambrozy, who added that they were now desperate for money to pay for their own medicine.

"Ninety percent of the righteous being awarded today in Poland have no money for basic medications or even for a ticket to come to their own ceremonies," she lamented.

Ceremonies for the righteous are held almost every month in Poland as aging

survivors sometimes wait until late in life to let their families and Yad Vashem know about their protectors and their wartime suffering.

Ambrozy's boss, cultural attache Ya'akov Finkelstein, points to what he says is an equally disturbing stumbling block for the Righteous Gentiles.

"I get letters each month from people who tell us they don't want the ceremony where they live, they don't want people to know about the award, which really shocked me when I came here," Finkelstein said.

Some medal recipients worry their fellow villagers will be jealous, Finkelstein said.

"They're concerned that their neighbors think they're getting money from the Jews," he explained.

"Others were worried that they might be robbed if the media put the word out that they got some kind of award, and then there are some who say their neighbors will condemn them for being supported by Jews. It seems the further east in the country you go, the more common that attitude is," Finkelstein estimated.

Saving Jews from the gas chambers in Poland was a remarkable feat of bravery in the country that had the largest number of Jews perish.

The Nazi punishment for Poles who helped Jews was death, often the death of one's entire family. Some who merely gave food to Jews were murdered on the spot, while others were tortured before being killed and many were sent to concentration camps.

Yet more people in Poland helped Jews than in any other nation, according to Yad Vashem, which has recognized nearly 6,000 Righteous Among the Nations in Poland.

There is a very active association of those who saved Jews that touts its members' achievements with pride, but whether their deeds are admired or even appreciated by most Poles remains unclear.

"It's ridiculous that there were Poles who were not afraid of the Nazis, but are afraid of their neighbors," Finkelstein said.

An extensive report last spring in Poland's leading daily, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, chronicled the fear some recipients of the Yad Vashem medal feel.

Estee Ya'ari, spokeswoman for Yad Vashem, said via e-mail that most people who receive the recognition are proud, but added, "we have heard of a few cases in Poland where righteous

prefer that their names not be made public, and this is indeed an unfortunate comment on the environment in which they live. As for other countries, we are not familiar with similar cases."

To strengthen the official endorsement of Righteous Gentiles' position in Polish life, more

Polish politicians, including the current national president and the heads of both houses of Parliament, have been turning up at the Israeli Embassy's award ceremonies.

The righteous also are frequently referred to in politicians' speeches as one of the country's deepest sources of pride. In Lodz, a city recently known for its numerous initiatives memorializing Jews, a park dedicated to the righteous has been opened.

In Krakow, one of the country's first exhibitions devoted to the righteous opened earlier this year at the Galicia Jewish Museum.

However, the righteous face the same financial difficulties as all other aging

people in Eastern Europe. Their tiny pensions — most live on \$150 to \$300 a month — have not kept pace with inflation, and many struggle to survive.

Poland, for instance, has some of the highest prices for medicine per income in the European Union; in Ukraine, gas and electricity prices have been particularly difficult for the elderly to bear.

Yad Vashem's medal award is meant as a symbolic endorsement of moral courage, since a financial award might suggest that one should help others for personal economic gain, those familiar with the recognition program explain.

Cash-strapped local governments say they would love to provide greater sustenance to the righteous, but insist they already face many other social problems that affect all of their elderly.

The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, founded in 1986, is the only organization that provides financial support to those who have received the Yad Vashem recognition.

The New York-based Claims Conference, which has a budget of \$1.4 million, provides stipends to 1,450 men and women in 28 countries, including about 700 in Poland.

The monthly support in Poland was raised from \$75 to \$100 in May — and is paid out quarterly.

"It definitely helps me survive; it means I can get medicine" said Righteous Gentile Maria Florek, whose pension is \$200 a month.

Stanlee Joyce Stahl, the foundation's executive vice president, hinted that descendants of Holocaust survivors should be interested in the well-being of the descendants of the righteous.

"If the survivors went on and had children and grandchildren, the question is, where is the family?" she asked "Most people during the Holocaust were bystanders. There were a precious few rescuers. There is not enough the Jewish community could ever do for them."

First published in JTA



Polish Righteous Gentile Maria Florek.

## "THE HIGHEST HONOR OF THE BEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD"

(Continued from page 6)

could strike anyone. "No one knew when he would die," Ted noted, "It was all random." When prisoners passed away, Ted would bury them, and recite the Kaddish. "I buried my friends, my comrades, American soldiers," Ted said, "and asked the Good Lord to let them rest in peace."

When the Chinese learned that Ted was originally from Hungary, they offered to let him return to his home country, which at the time was a Soviet satellite. They promised him a job, good clothes, all the food he could want. But Ted refused to be a pawn for Chinese propaganda and turned them down. "I stood by my oath," he said. Ted stayed in the camp until the end of the war, when he was released. The Army credits him with saving over 40 lives during his two and a half years of imprisonment.

When Ted returned to the United States, he finally received his U.S. citizenship. "I was the happiest man in the world," he said. He left the Army and worked at his brother Emery's store. Ted married, and he and his wife Yvonne had two children. By this time, there was no talk of medals;

the country was moving on, and anyway, many men in Ted's original unit thought he was dead. He created a wonder at a 1980 Korean War veterans' reunion simply by showing up.

Ted's case was brought to the Army's attention in 1985, but he was ineligible to receive the award until statutory language was amended in 1996. His is one of many cases being reviewed under section 552 of the 2002 National Defense Authorization Act, which requires the military to "review the records of certain Jewish-American and Hispanic-American war veterans to determine if any of these veterans should be awarded the Medal of Honor."

Most such awards will unfortunately be posthumous. But on September 23, President Bush gave Corporal Ted Rubin long overdue recognition for his many acts of valor in the Korean conflict. Ted received, in his own words, "the highest honor of the best country in the world." How does he feel about it? "It still hasn't sunk in," he said. "I'm just a country boy. It's a dream come true."

First appeared on National Review Online

## POLAND WORKS WITH YAD VASHEM TO IDENTIFY "RIGHTEOUS" POLES

(Continued from page 10)

tory of all places on Polish territory where wartime crimes had been committed on Polish Jews and those brought to suffer from other countries of occupied Europe." Professor Shevach Weiss from the institute in Jerusalem and former Israeli ambassador to Poland is convinced the cooperation with IPN already is, and will continue to be important and valuable.

Besides strictly historical gains from the IPN-Yad Vashem cooperation, can one of its effects be overcoming the many negative stereotypes which have accumulated in Polish-Jewish relations? Mateusz Szpytna from IPN is confident the results will be visible.

Professor Weiss adds the cooperation Yad Vashem has been pursuing with the Institute of National Remembrance extends beyond the subject of Nazi crimes during the war. A sensitive issue is documented Polish participation in some of these atrocities, like the mass murder of Jews in Jedwabne in 1941.

"We talked about Jedwabne after a very intensive, long and systematic work of IPN, with professors Kieres and Kulesza. It was

one of the cases where cooperation between Yad Vashem and IPN was very positive. Unfortunately, we have many things to do in the future. The Righteous Among nations, the next generation and the third generation after them and many other issues."

Indeed the Righteous Among Nations are a special category of people who helped save Jewish lives during the Holocaust. In Nazi-occupied Poland this was punishable by death, yet Poles constitute by far the largest part of that group of many nations.

Polish-Jewish relations are a rich area for study, but they also contain many tragic elements with anti-Semitic roots. An example is the pogrom in Kielce in 1945. Professor Shevach Weiss says this makes the events even more tragic.

The latest cooperation agreement between the Polish Institute of National Remembrance and the Israeli Yad Vashem will surely contribute to resolving some of the grim mysteries governing the dark mechanisms of racial hatred and oppression. It will also shed light on the heroic acts of individuals who did not hesitate to risk their lives to save others.

## ROMANIA COMMEMORATES HOLOCAUST VICTIMS

Romania commemorated its national Holocaust day with ceremonies marking 65 years since the beginning of deportations of hundreds of thousands of Jews to death camps in the occupied Soviet Union.

President Traian Basescu laid the first stone of a national monument being built to commemorate Holocaust victims in central Bucharest. He reminded participants that Romania only recently began to confront its role in the Holocaust after decades of denial.

During communist times, the country's official history taught that Germans were the sole perpetrators of the Holocaust, ignoring the involvement of Romania's wartime leaders.

In 2004 after a dispute with Israel over comments about the Holocaust, then-President Ion Iliescu assembled an international panel, led by Nobel-prize winner Elie Wiesel, to investigate the Holocaust in Romania.

The panel concluded that the pro-Nazi government of Marshal Ion Antonescu was responsible for the deaths of 280,000-380,000 Jews and more than 11,000 Gypsies, or Roma.

"This was a country where the Holocaust was a taboo subject," Paul Shapiro, Director of the Center for Advanced Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington told The Associated Press.

Shapiro said Romania was now following the panel's recommendations by creating an institution to study the Holocaust and a national monument to commemorate the victims.

Dozens of elderly Jewish and Roma survivors of the deportations were present at the ceremonies, and hailed the decision to build the monument.

"The fact that, despite the delay, the Romanian government has acknowledged the responsibility of state authorities of the time for what happened ... is encouraging for us survivors," said author Oliver Lustig.

Lustig, now 79, was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau at the age of 17 with his parents and six siblings by Hungarian authorities who controlled northern Romania at the time.

Roma survivor Dumitru Tranca, 71, also insisted that new generations "must know what happened, what we suffered." Tranca was deported with his family of coppersmiths to camps in an area in the occupied Soviet Union, where his parents and two sisters died.

## CASE INVOLVING AUSCHWITZ ARTIFACTS HIGHLIGHTS ETHICAL DILEMMA FOR MUSEUMS

BY DINAH A. SPRITZER

Museums chronicling Jewish life and death — including the Holocaust — safeguard the memory of millions who can no longer speak.

These institutions often rely on artifacts — items bequeathed by those who want to share their family's history with the world for posterity, to tell their stories.

But at former Nazi concentration camps that are now museums, the artifacts were largely items that were already on site, so they were obtained without the consent of former owners or their heirs.

So who has the right to claim them?

It is perhaps the ultimate ethical nightmare for a Jewish museum.

That nightmare is embodied in the case of Dina Gottliebova Babbitt, who has a claim against the Auschwitz Museum in Poland.

The 83-year-old Jewish artist, Czech-born and now living in California, was forced by the infamous Dr. Josef Mengele in Auschwitz to paint watercolors of gypsies — also known as Roma — as part of his effort to document their genetic inferiority.

Babbitt has unsuccessfully been trying for years to get seven of her paintings back from the Auschwitz Museum. The museum argues that the artworks' role as crucial evidence in one of the 20th century's greatest crime against humanity supersedes her ownership rights and her emotional attachment to the works that saved her and her mother's life.

Museum spokesman Jaroslav Mensfelt suggests that acknowledging owners' rights to thousands of Auschwitz artifacts would undermine the museum's ability to educate the public at a time when Holocaust denial has reached new levels. He explains the museum's position, which it is also taking with a French man who took legal action earlier this year in an attempt to reclaim his father's suitcase.

"A good example is the Arbeit Mach Frei gate. We know the author of this sign.

Within the Babbitt way of thinking, why shouldn't the author claim the gate and hang it on his wall?"

Despite Mensfelt's reasoning, Babbitt's case has elicited outrage among artists and museum directors that a concentration camp survivor should be thwarted by a museum devoted to depicting Jewish suffering. But experts in cura-

his paintings, whether paid for or not, as his private property, six decades after he had painted them?" Bauer wrote in an e-mail.

He added that it was "a scandal" for Babbitt "to demand that pictures of Gypsy victims that testify to genocide should become her private property, to be sold on the market or hung in her private apartment."

Babbitt has expressed a desire to move the paintings to an American museum.

Kalman Sultanik of the Auschwitz International Council said that although he thinks that this move would be wrong, the Auschwitz Museum needs to reach some sort of compromise with Babbitt that would honor her role as the painting's creator.

The Holocaust Museum in Washington would not weigh in on the Babbitt case, although in a written statement the museum expressed understanding for both sides in the conflict.

A Yad Vashem spokeswoman noted that the museum had dealt with a handful of victim claims, some concluding with the return of property.

Michaela Hajkova, a curator for the Jewish Museum in Prague, explains that she had dealt with a small number of situations in which heirs sought to recover artworks.

The most significant case for the Prague museum's collections involved 174 expressionistic portraits of life at the *Theresienstadt* camp painted by artist Bedrich Fritta before he was murdered at Auschwitz. The hidden paintings were given to the museum by Fritta's friend after World War II, and it was only in the mid-1990s that Fritta's son Tomas claimed them.

"We knew he didn't have the facilities to store these or a clue of how to take care of them. We knew the paintings were essential as documents from evidence. We were worried they might be destroyed," said Hajkova.

But even with that knowledge, "We just gave them back," said Hajkova. "We recognized his moral right."



Dina Gottliebova Babbitt is suing the Auschwitz Museum in Poland for the return of the watercolors she drew as a prisoner of the death camp.

torial ethics and historians are by no means united about the museum's position.

The chairman of the council's legal committee, Patrick Boylan, accused the Auschwitz Museum in an e-mail of behaving like a institution wanting to keep Nazi-looted art from Jewish heirs.

To those focused on Holocaust education, the need for the public to be aware of what Babbitt's paintings represent is paramount. The works are part of an exhibition on the Nazi's attempted extermination of the Roma. Estimates of gypsy victims range from 250,000 to half a million, but what is agreed upon is that they lost a greater percentage of their ethnic group, about 50 percent, than any other group besides Jews.

Yehuda Bauer, a renowned Holocaust scholar and adviser to Yad Vashem, also said the Babbitt paintings were essential to the museum.

"Do you think that if Rembrandt was alive, he should have the right to reclaim

## DISTORTING JEWISH HISTORY

(Continued from page 7)

Holocaust — resulted in tens of thousands of Jews fleeing Poland.

After World War II, Jew-hunting continued when Lena Küchler-Silberman set up an orphanage in Poland to care for Jewish children who had lost their parents in the Holocaust. However, Polish villagers attacked the orphanage and attempted to murder the children, so with all 100 of them, she fled and undertook a treacherous and dangerous journey to safety in Israel.

In 1952 — seven years after the Holocaust ended — on what is now known as the "Night of the Murdered Poets," Joseph Stalin ordered that thirteen of the most prominent Yiddish writers in the Soviet Union be executed.

State-sponsored anti-Semitism also didn't end with the defeat of Hitler. In 2003, Malaysian Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir

Mohammed, drew a standing ovation at an Islamic Conference when he announced, "...But today, the Jews rule this world by proxy. They get others to fight and die for them...They invented socialism, communism, human rights and democracy, so that persecuting them would appear wrong..."

Last year, in 2005, fifteen members of the State Duma of the Russian Federation demanded that Jewish organizations be banned from the country. And in June, 500 prominent Russians demanded that the state prosecutor examine ancient Jewish texts, claiming they were "anti-Russian."

As the newly elected Palestinian terrorist organization Hamas joins Iran's President in calling for the destruction of Israel, it becomes essential that the creation of Israel be understood to be the result of two thousand years of Jewish

persecution, including the Holocaust. While the most horrific expression of Jew hatred was indeed the slaughter of millions of Jews at the hands of the Nazis. It must be remembered that this macabre event represents an intrinsic element of a larger mosaic of pain, tragedy, suffering and intolerance that has scarred the human race since the beginning of recorded time.

Dagobert Runes, in 1968, stated that Jews have been persecuted through vampire trials and Black Death accusations, through the Count Rindfleisch campaign (146 Jewish communities were exterminated in six months), the Hussite wars (almost the entire Jewish population of Prague perished) and the Chmielnicki bloodbath (a brutal Cossack who massacred Jews) the Russian pogroms, Rumanian barbarism and the Nazi Holocaust.

Since the creation of the Jewish Homeland, Jews in the Diaspora are no longer destined to religious, ethnic or cultural persecution without the option of escape. But now, Israel has become the new target. And as fresh alliances are formed between Arab states and anti-Zionist Westerners with the common goal of destroying Jewish nationhood, it is important to remember the entire bloodied mosaic of immense suffering that led to the creation of Israel in the first place.

The history of the Jewish people is not properly defined by presenting the Holocaust as an isolated event, and it is totally misrepresented by computer simulations that require students to role-play oppressed Palestinians and Invader Jews. To avoid distortion and misrepresentation, Jewish history must be kept intact and in context.

First appeared on FrontPageMagazine.com

## PERSONALIZING THE PERPETRATORS

(Continued from page 4)

Here, then, we get the account Wilhelm Grill, who worked in the post office building of Mauthausen concentration camp while still in his early twenties; Paul Wolfram, who managed the infamous Mauthausen quarry; Dr. Erika Flocken, chief physician at Muehldorf, who selected the prisoners destined for Auschwitz; and Christian Mohr, a guard at Flossenbürg accused of beating prisoners and taking an active role in their execution — going so far as to put the noose around victims' necks.

Two chapters highlight the cases of Heinrich Buuck, Julius Straub and Peter Goldmann, who all killed prisoners on death marches during the final phases of the war; another two sections trace the behavior of a Czech and a Spanish national who served as Capos during the war and were consequently prosecuted for the mistreatment of other concentration camp inmates. A significant proportion of this book, meanwhile, pays attention to crimes committed against Americans during the war.

Two successive chapters deal with German civilians who attacked downed US pilots; another focuses on the fate of American prisoners of war in Berga camp in Thuringia, and a fourth follows the story of Dr. Max Schmid, who removed the head from an American corpse, allegedly for scientific research.

On occasion, however, *The Dachau Defendants* moves away from a study of specific characters and provides instead a more generalized account of a set of criminal events. One chapter utilizes the testimony of a Buchenwald stretcher bearer, Marian Zgoda, to describe a special detail known as "Commando 99" — organized to execute the murder of prisoners who came to the camp's "clinic" for supposed medical examinations. This section of the book seems much more concerned with how this deception was played out than with offering a personal history of the chief perpetrators, and thus fails to give any real insight into the psychological makeup of those involved. Another chapter, meanwhile, stands out for focusing more on the

victim's family and his legal wrangles with the War Crimes Commission at Dachau than with the actual men accused of murdering American airman Daniel P. Loyd. The author bases her study exclusively on primary source material "with the exception of background information available in any textbook on modern European history." She thus draws upon letters, petitions, military records, psychiatric reports, trial documents and other material which has found its way into the case files preserved in the *American National Archives and Records Administration* in Maryland. Testimonies from both survivors and former Nazis are reproduced at length, recalling in horrific detail the abuse and murder of countless concentration camp victims and ensuring the reality of the crimes is not lost amid defendants' posturing.

Overall, the book does a good job of individualizing and re-humanizing some of the criminal figures of the Third Reich and in explaining the factors that could compel someone to participate in such actions.

## SERBIA URGED TO EXTRADITE NAZI SUSPECTS

A director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center urged Serbian authorities to seek the extradition of two Croatia-born men and try them for alleged World War II atrocities against Jews, Serbs and Gypsies.

Efraim Zuroff, the Los Angeles-based center's chief Nazi hunter, met in Belgrade with President Boris Tadic and Justice Ministry officials, advising them to join efforts to bring to justice Ivo Rojnica and Milivoj Asner.

The men served in Croatia's World War II Nazi puppet regime and allegedly took part in the prosecution and death camp deportations of hundreds of Jews, Serbs and Gypsies, Zuroff said.

Although the men are not Serbian citizens and their alleged crimes were committed in the territory of present-day Croatia, the ethnicity of some of the victims "entitles Serbia to seek extradition" of Rojnica and Asner, living in Argentina and Austria, respectively, Zuroff said.

Last year, Croatia indicted Asner for crimes against humanity and war crimes, but Austrian authorities failed to arrest the 92-year-old man. Croatia has since shown little resolve to press for the handover of Asner, or to seek extradition of Rojnica, 90, who is believed to be living in Buenos Aires, Zuroff said.

"When it comes to the Second World War cases, in our attempts to see justice done it has always been important to consider the victim's origins and identity," he said.

Rojnica is allegedly responsible for crimes committed against hundreds of Serbs, Jews and Gypsies in the southern city of Dubrovnik. Asner allegedly sent victims from the town of Slavenska Poega to a Croat-run death camp, where most of them later died.

"The passing of time does not diminish what those men did. If someone committed a war crime in 1941 or 1942 and if 60 years have passed and they were not brought to justice, it does not mean that person's responsibility is not the same today as it was then," said Zuroff, who spearheads "Operation: Last Chance," an effort to get Nazi suspects arrested and tried before they die.

Tens of thousands of Jews, Serbs and Gypsies perished during the so-called Independent State of Croatia, which the Nazis set up when they invaded the former Yugoslavia in 1941 and encouraged ethnic violence among the country's diverse population.

## STAMP HONORS HOLOCAUST HERO

BY CHRISTOPHER LEE

Sixty-six years ago, Hiram Bingham IV, a blue-blood American diplomat in France, defied U.S. policy by helping Jews escape the Nazis in the early years of World War II.

Bingham's actions cost him his Foreign Service career but won him the undying gratitude of the more than 2,000 refugees he helped save by issuing them travel visas and false passports, and even at times sheltering them in his home.

Only in recent years has his heroism been officially recognized by his own country.

Bingham, the Yale-educated son of a former U.S. senator, died in 1988 at 84.

His own children did not learn the extent of his wartime deeds until 1996, when a son found a cache of old journals and correspondence stashed in a hidden closet in the family's Connecticut home.

Soon Bingham's face — and, supporters hope, his story — will be well known across the United States, as the U.S. Postal Service issued a stamp in his honor.

More than a dozen family members, joined by several members of Congress and a few Jewish survivors whom Bingham helped, gathered at the Rayburn House Office Building for an unveiling of the stamp.

Bingham, known to friends and family as "Harry," hailed from a prominent New England family.

His father, Hiram Bingham III, was an

archaeologist who rediscovered the ruins of the Inca city of Machu Picchu in Peru in 1911 and later served briefly as Connecticut governor and as a Republican U.S. senator from that state.

After graduating from Yale, Harry Bingham entered the Foreign Service and eventually became U.S. vice consul in Marseille, France, in 1936.

Within a few years Hitler's armies began marching over Europe, occupying France

in 1940 and working with the Vichy French government. The United States had not yet entered the war, and President Franklin D.

Roosevelt's State Department told consular officials to keep the number of U.S.-bound immigrants and refugees as low as possible.

As thousands of Jews fled the Nazis to southern France, Americans concerned about their plight organized the Emergency Rescue Committee.

They persuaded Roosevelt to authorize a few hundred "emergency visas" for artists and intellectuals, and they enlisted journalist and scholar Varian Fry to help Jews in France get to the United States.

But Bingham, in defiance of U.S. policy, went much further, helping thousands of Jews escape. He provided Fry with a visa

and other travel documents, some fraudulent, and let rescue activists use his home for planning meetings.

After German and French officials got wind of the rescue activity and complained to the U.S. government, the State Department revoked Fry's passport in early 1941 and transferred Bingham to Portugal, and later to the embassy in Argentina.

Bingham called attention to reports that Nazi assets and war criminals were being given safe harbor in Argentina, but the State Department quashed his efforts to investigate.

Bingham resigned in protest in 1946 and returned to Connecticut, ending his career four years shy of his pension.

It would be nearly six decades before Secretary of State Colin Powell honored Bingham posthumously with a special "constructive dissent" award in 2002.

"He's the only U.S. diplomat ... that we know of who risked his career, indeed sacrificed his career, in order to save Jews from the Holocaust," said Rafael Medoff, director of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

"We want young people to hear about this courageous voice, because Harry is a great example of how at a time of crisis it is possible to stand up and to do the right thing, despite the risks."

First published in the *Washington Post*



## FASHIONING WOMEN IN THE THIRD REICH

(Continued from page 4)

modern "New Woman," independent and wanton a la Marlene Dietrich (in pants yet!) and Greta Garbo. Thus, according to them, it was the Jews who were destroying true German womanhood and, hence, undermining the "Fatherland."

And then there were those many more Nazis who simply seethed with anger and jealousy when they viewed the amazing success of Jews in the German fashion industry. Not surprisingly, many of them would soon become eager members of "Adefa," the organization charged with the "aryanization" of these businesses and the "cleans[ing of] Jews from all areas of the fashion industry."

Interestingly, in the end, as Guenther

conscientiously tells it, neither the dirndl nor the uniformed look pushed by the Nazis met with much acceptance by German women. But 100% of Germany's Jews were thrown out of the fashion industry . . . ironically, for many, to continue their work now as slave laborers for the Nazis, making the same so-called "trashy" gowns and dresses the SS wives and even the "First Lady of the Reich," Frau Goebbels, stubbornly never stopped wearing. Indeed, it appears that if the dirndl or uniformed look was meant for anyone, it was a prescription for the masses . . . not the elite . . .

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

## A RIGHTEOUS FAMILY IS HONORED...

(Continued from page 10)

The Hulatas immigrated to Israel in 1946. Ben Hulata had gone back to see the Dutch family in 1965 when he went to study agriculture in Holland, and had then lost touch with them, although his brother had visited the family in 1992.

Last year, Ben Hulata tracked down Elbert Colenbrander, 79, in Holland, and worked tirelessly to have the family recognized as "Righteous Among the Nations" by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

Colenbrander was very surprised when Ben Hulata contacted him with the idea, feeling it was "a big honor he did not deserve," Colenbrander's daughter Wilma, 46, recalled, as her father, and her late grandparents received Yad

Vashem's highest honor in the Garden of the Righteous.

Colenbrander, who broke out in tears at the emotion-fraught ceremony, never talked much about the war with his children, and only discussed it when asked, his daughter said.

Over the years, he always said that he was taught that as a Christian, you do these things for other people, his daughter said.

At the simple ceremony, the memories of the war, and his family's actions, flooded the now-elderly man, and, for a moment, the decades of oft-hidden emotions were overpowering.

First published in *The Jerusalem Post*



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