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UN MARKS HOLOCAUST DAY AS CONSTANT REMINDER TO PREVENT FUTURE GENOCIDES

On January 29, the United Nations marked the annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust with an urgent appeal that the remembrance of the millions of Jews and others murdered by the Nazis serve to prevent new massacres, a rebuff for those who deny that the tragedy ever occurred, and moving testimony from survivors.

"The Holocaust was a unique and undeniable tragedy," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a video message played to a special memorial ceremony in the General Assembly Hall on the Holocaust in which 6 million Jews, 500,000 Roma and Sinti and other minorities, disabled and homosexuals were killed.

"Decades later, the systematic murder of millions of Jews and others retains its power to shock. The ability of the Nazis to command a following, despite their utter depravity, still strikes fear. And above all, the pain remains: for aging survivors, and for all of us as a human family that witnessed a descent into barbarism.

He emphasized the importance of remembrance in tribute to those who perished and in global efforts to stem the tide

of human cruelty.

He said the presence at today's ceremony of disabled persons and the community showed that, even now, the act of bearing witness can offer new perspectives, while the participation of young people highlighted the value of going beyond remembrance to ensure that new generations know this history.

General Assembly President Sheikha Haya Al Khalifa called for paying tribute to all victims – the needless deaths of millions of Jews and the suffering endured by the many minority groups that were also victims, some of whom were present in the Hall.



More than 500 people gathered at the UN headquarters in New York to mark the annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

"Today's commemoration is an important reminder of the universal lessons of the Holocaust, a unique evil which cannot simply be consigned to the past and forgotten. The Holocaust was a historical event, which cannot be denied. Its consequences still reverberate in the present," she told the ceremony.

"It is a tragedy that the international community has not been able to stop new horrors in the years

since the Holocaust. This makes it all the more important that we remember the lessons of the past so that we do not make the same mistakes in the future. We must remain vigilant. The forces of hatred, bigotry and racism are still at work in the world."

Thomas Schindlmayr, who works on disability issues for the UN but was speaking in his personal capacity, discussed the persecution of people with disabilities under Nazi Germany. "They were stripped of any legal protection and denied control over their own lives and bodies," he said, recalling the forced sterilization of persons with disabilities and other abuses. While much had been learned since then, the notion that persons with disabilities are somehow inferior is still prevalent, he warned.

The keynote speaker, Simone Veil, a member of the Constitutional Council of France and President of the Foundation *Pour la Mémoire de la Shoah*, said that by creating this annual observance, the UN had remained faithful to its founding principles.

"For those of us who were deported, not a day goes by that we do not think of the Shoah," said Ms. Veil, who was a prisoner in Auschwitz, and was at Bergen-Belsen when that camp was liberated by the British Army. "What obsesses us the most is the memory of those from whom we were brutally separated when we arrived at the camps, and who we later learned

were sent straight to the gas chambers," she added, recalling how her own father and brother were taken away, never to be seen again.

"We thought we had no more tears but we still wept, and I still weep today when I think of" those who were marched directly to the gas chambers, she said. "And I think of it every day, many times."

She said that, while those who survived hoped and pledged "Never again," their warnings were in vain. "After the massacres in Cambodia, it is Africa that is paying the highest price in genocidal terms," she said, referring in particular to the events in Darfur, Sudan, and calling for UN action in response.

Under-Secretary-General Shashi Tharoor, who moderated the event, said it had two key purposes: "Of course, we meet to mourn that part of our human family that is missing – to remember the individuals and tell each other their stories. But we also meet to unearth the lessons we can draw from their lives and their fates."

He said the first among those lessons "is that, just as human beings have an almost infinite power to destroy, they also possess an enormous capacity to learn, to grow and to create."

Ceremonies were held in other UN outposts around the world. "The sheer dimensions of the organized murder of



Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American and International Societies for Yad Vashem and Simone Veil, keynote speaker at the annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust at the UN, President of the Foundation *Pour la Mémoire de la Shoah*.



Eli Zborowski, Chairman American and International Societies for Yad Vashem and Under-Secretary-General of the UN Shashi Tharoor.

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Jews and others, the very scale of the systematic attempt at destroying an entire people, make the Holocaust a unique calamity that cannot – and should not – be forgotten, let alone denied," the Director-General of the UN Office in Geneva told a ceremony at the *Palais des Nations*.

Earlier, the General Assembly condemned without reservation any denial of the Holocaust, with only Iran publicly disassociating itself from the consensus resolution.

YAD VASHEM LAUNCHES WEB SITE IN FARSI TO COMBAT HOLOCAUST DENIAL

Israel's Holocaust memorial, Yad Vashem, has launched a version of its Web site in Farsi to educate Israel's most bitter enemy, Iran, about the Nazi slaughter of 6 million Jews.

The site was unveiled last week of January to coincide with the U.N.'s annual Holocaust remembrance day.

"Every year, nearly 20,000 people from Muslim countries, including Iran, visit the Yad Vashem Web site," said Avner Shalev, Yad Vashem's chairman. "We believe that making credible, comprehensive information about the Holocaust available to Persian speakers can contribute to the fight against Holocaust denial."

January 27, marked the 62nd anniversary

of the Auschwitz death camp's liberation by the advancing Soviet army, and came a day after the U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution condemning the denial of the Holocaust. Only Iran rejected the resolution.

The U.N. resolution did not single out any country, but Israel and the United States both suggested that Iran should take note.

Yad Vashem's Farsi site includes 20 historical chapters, including dozens of photos, arranged chronologically, from the rise of the Nazis to power until the postwar trials of Nazi leaders. The site also includes a poem by Abramek Koplowicz, a Jewish boy murdered in Auschwitz at age 14.

A COALITION OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS CALLED FOR A DELAY IN RESTITUTION DEADLINES

A coalition of Holocaust survivors called for a delay in restitution deadlines, so a newly opened archive may be examined.

The coalition of 24 groups from across the United States said in an open letter that the opening earlier this year of archives in Bad Arolsen, Germany — perhaps the largest repository of Holocaust-era information — could lead to new information for survivors and their families seeking restitution.

They cited recent settlements with Holocaust-era insurers, including the

Italian company Generali, that are due to lapse in coming months.

"Now, with 19 miles of previously suppressed documents from the Nazi period being made public, isn't it time to halt the rush to judgment, the rush for closure, and require the full, transparent accounting that we survivors are morally and legally entitled to move forward without any further impediments?" the letter said.

"We call on all institutions of good faith, in government, in the media, and in the institutional world, to support us in our morally justified demand for transparency and justice."

BIALYSTOK JEWISH GHETTO UPRISING ANNIVERSARY

Events marking the 63rd anniversary of the uprising in the Bialystok Jewish ghetto in eastern Poland were held in the city. It was the second-biggest Jewish armed rising against Nazi Germans during World War II, after the Warsaw Jewish Ghetto Uprising. Over 40,000 people lived in the ghetto, which the Nazis began to liquidate in 1943.

Some 800 people were killed on the spot and the rest started to be transported to death camps. The uprising lasted for almost a week. Some 300 to 400 insurgents had only 25 guns and 100 pistols. About 1,000 Jews, who found shelter in the nearby forest, survived the war. Around 10,000 were taken to death camps at Treblinka, Majdanek and Auschwitz.

ITALIAN PRESIDENT INAUGURATES NEW HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL IN MILAN

Italian Head of State Giorgio Napolitano was one of the major guests at the ceremony celebrating the establishment of a Holocaust Museum Memorial in Milan's Central Station.

Donated by the Italian railway company to the local Jewish Community, the Milan memorial is hosted in a huge two-room space in the underground of the train station.

Formerly known as "the invisible station," the six-thousand square-meter space overlooks platform 21, the ill-famed departure point from which more than 8,000 Italian and foreign Jews were deported towards Nazi extermination camps between 1943 and 1944.

When track 21 was in use, Jews were crammed into wagons situated in the underground level. Hidden from sight, a then very modern lift was used to raise the railway wagons to the ground level, from where a locomotive would eventually haul them to Auschwitz.

Sara Modena, Cultural Councillor of

the Milan Jewish community told EJP she felt the memorial will host an important part on the history of the Holocaust, open to all the people that crowd the station on a daily basis.

"What should strike the visitors -she underlined- is that, unlike most places

like this throughout Europe, this site remained literally untouched in the last 60 years." Modena said. "So many people left from the centre of Milan and nobody noticed" she concluded.

Napolitano called the initiative "very meaningful"

and praised the intention of keeping alive the memory of Holocaust, that he defined "one of the harshest lessons in contemporary history."

Particularly struck by a ceremony that was accompanied by the rattling of the trains from the ground floor, the president also stressed the importance of recalling that "an everyday life place of a great town hosted great atrocities."



From L to R: Milan's Mayor Letizia Moratti, Enzo Gattegna, chairman of the Italian Union of Jewish Communities, Filippo Penati, President of Milan's Province.

WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT: HOLOCAUST DAY OF COMMEMORATION

President Bush issued a statement paying tribute to the victims and survivors of the Holocaust on the occasion of the United Nations designated International Day of Commemoration.

"On the second International Day of Commemoration, we remember and mourn the victims of the Holocaust.

Sixty-two years after the liberation of Auschwitz, we must continue to educate ourselves about the lessons of the Holocaust, and honor those whose lives were taken as a result of a racist ideology that embraced a national policy of violent hatred and bigotry. It is also our responsibility to honor the survivors and those courageous souls who refused to be bystanders, and instead risked their

lives to try and save the Nazis' intended victims.

Remembering the victims, heroes, and lessons of the Holocaust is particularly important today, as Holocaust denial continues, urged on by the Iranian regime, which perversely seeks to call into question the historical fact of the Nazis' campaign of mass murder. We must continue to condemn the resurgence of anti-Semitism, that same virulent intolerance that led to the Holocaust, and we must combat bigotry and hatred in all their forms, in America and abroad.

May God bless the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. And may we never forget."

LIFE FOR GERMAN JEWS ECHOES 1930S

Life for Jewish people in Germany has become reminiscent of the 1930s, a community leader claimed recently, after figures showed the number of neo-Nazi hate crimes had increased by 50 per cent in two years.

Sixty-one years after the end of Hitler's Third Reich, his followers continue to brutalize and intimidate Jews and other minorities across the country.

But the latest crime figures have shocked politicians and human rights groups alike. Between January and August 2006, some 8,000 offences were reported to the Federal Criminal Office — 20 percent more than the previous year and 50 percent more than in 2004.

The incidents include drunken neo-Nazis hurling *The Diary of Anne Frank* into a bonfire as they chanted Nazi-era songs, and one shortly after, that when a teenage boy was forced to wear a sign saying he was the "biggest pig" for befriending Jews.

The issue has been catapulted back into public consciousness after the success of the extremist National Democratic Party (NPD), led by Udo Pastörs, in regional

elections in September. Far-right politicians now sit on three state governments in Germany.

Charlotte Knobloch, the president of the Central Council of Jews, warned: "Anyone who still talks in terms of unfortunate one-off incidents is failing to grasp a danger facing the whole of society. The aggression has become reminiscent of 1933."

That was when Hitler began a boycott of Jewish businesses and his stormtroopers unleashed their reign of terror — beatings and threats — that ultimately led to the Holocaust.

She accused both politicians and society of deliberately neglecting the spiralling anti-Semitism and right-wing radicalism despite warnings.

Mrs. Knobloch said that these attributes were "firmly anchored in certain sections of the population."

A German foreign ministry spokesman said: "It is a problem we must face now if we are to preserve Germany's image abroad and its chosen multi-cultural path at home. The situation as it stands is simply intolerable."

CHIRAC HONORS FRENCH WHO RESCUED JEWS FROM HOLOCAUST

President Jacques Chirac honored nearly 3,000 French people who rescued Jews from the Nazis, in a ceremony at the Pantheon in central Paris.

It is the first such formal tribute to the group, known as the "Righteous of France." Chirac — who, 12 years ago, became France's first president to recognize the French government's role in the mass deportation of Jews during the Holocaust — also extended the tribute to those anonymous French nationals who risked their lives to save Jews.

Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial has inducted more than 21,000 worldwide — including 2,725 French citizens — into its "Righteous Among the Nations" group for non-Jews who saved Jews. Only 240 of the French inductees are still alive. Seventy-four of them attend

ed the ceremony.

Chirac praised the "Righteous," saying that, thanks to them, "we can look our history in the face, sometimes seeing profoundly dark moments, but also the best and most glorious" moments.

Thanks to them, "we can be proud to be French," Chirac said.

Six million Jews were killed by the Nazis and their collaborators, part of the Nazi "final solution" aimed at wiping out the Jews of Europe. One-quarter of France's Jewish community perished during the Holocaust, compared with 90 percent in Poland and 75 percent in the Netherlands.

Speaking at the Pantheon, Chirac urged the French people to be "merciless" in the fight against Holocaust denial, which he called a "crime against truth, an absolute perversion of the soul and the spirit."

GERMANY TO PUSH FOR EU LAW CRIMINALIZING HOLOCAUST DENIAL

German Federal Minister of Justice Brigitte Zypries said at a press conference that Germany will attempt to make denial of the World War II-era Holocaust, in which millions of Jews died at the hands of the Nazis, illegal throughout the European Union. The plan is part of Germany's platform for its 2007 EU Presidency. Speaking on Germany's plan

for justice matters, Zypries stated that "denial of the Holocaust is an example of what would be punishable by law if standardization took place."

It is currently illegal to deny the Holocaust in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and Spain. Germany once before pressed for similar EU law, but was blocked by Italy.

EXTENSIVELY UPDATED ENCYCLOPAEDIA JUDAICA HITS SHELVES

BY PETER EPHROSS, JTA

The editors of the Encyclopaedia Judaica's new edition confronted a whole new world.

In the more than 30 years since the first edition was published, Jewish life has been revitalized in the former Communist world, Las Vegas and Atlanta have become fast-growing Jewish communities, and women have taken a much more active role in Jewish life — and their contributions have been increasingly recognized.

"The original edition did not take into account that 50 percent of Jews are women," said Judith Baskin, the director of the Jewish studies program at the University of Oregon and the encyclopedia's assistant editor for women and gender.

The new edition, the encyclopedia's second, attempts to rectify that oversight with more than 300 new entries on Jewish women, including biographical entries on well-known figures, such as former U.S. Rep. Bella Abzug (D-N.Y.) and entries on lesser-known women, like Beatrice Alexander — founder of the Madame Alexander doll collection — and Asenath Barzani, an Iraqi woman trained by her father in the 1600s as a Torah scholar.

These are among roughly 2,700 new entries in the new edition, to be published Dec. 8 by Macmillan Reference USA and Israel's Keter Publishing. The 22 volumes contain more than 21,000 entries on Jewish life.

A licensed, online version also will be available, but the hope is that institutions, and some individuals, will be willing to fork over \$1,995 — the online version will cost a few hundred dollars more — to have everything they wanted to know about the Jews printed, and at their fingertips.

The comprehensiveness offered by the collection is not available in any one online source, says Jay Flynn, a publisher with Thomson Gale, which owns Macmillan Reference USA.

"Certainly, you can go out and find a biography of Billy Crystal and you can read it. What we're really trying to deliver" is accessibility and authority, Flynn says.

Plus, Jews buy books out of proportion to their numbers, says Michael Berenbaum, the encyclopedia's executive editor.

"It's the smell of leather and all that

stuff," says Berenbaum, a Holocaust scholar known for his work in creating the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

It took a lot of effort to create that "stuff." Several years in the making, the encyclopedia relied on a worldwide team of scholars,

including some 1,200 new contributors. Luckily, the field of Jewish studies has experienced exponential growth in recent years.

"You're going to a man or woman who has devoted his or her entire life to a topic and you say, 'Give me 500 words,'"

Berenbaum says.

Those scholars pored over all the entries — from Aachen to Zyrardow — and updated 11,000 of them.

Overall, the new edition has more entries, covering Jewish life in the Southern Hemisphere — Australia and South America, for example — and the sections on American Jewish life and the Holocaust have been strengthened.

The dilemmas Berenbaum and his team faced about how to cover certain topics are well, almost, talmudic. For example, how do you describe Jewish

life in New York City? Their answer: Give a portrait of several neighborhoods, such as the historic German Jewish neighborhood of Washington Heights and the contemporary, heavily Orthodox neighborhoods of Williamsburg and Borough Park.

"We gave it a lot of flavor, something that the first encyclopedia was much less interested in," Berenbaum says, though he's quick to praise the editors of the first encyclopedia for their prodigious efforts in the pre-Internet era.

Also adding contemporary flavor to the new edition are entries discussing baseball player Shawn Green and the recent popularization of Kabbalah.

Not surprisingly, Israel is the largest single "entry," with an entire volume devoted to the Jewish state. Coming in second is the Holocaust.

Even entries on Holocaust-related matters created more questions: Should the noted Holocaust scholar Deborah Lipstadt have her own entry, or should her biography be part of an entry about the highly publicized 2000 trial that Lipstadt won after historian David Irving sued her in a British court, claiming she defamed him in a book by calling him a Holocaust denier?

The decision? Berenbaum is cagey.

"Read the encyclopedia," he says.



DEATH CAMP SITE TO BE RENOVATED

The International Auschwitz Council agreed to modernize a 51-year-old exhibition at the site of the Nazi death camp and build walls to prevent the ruins of gas chambers from sinking into the ground.

The decision to renovate and preserve remains of the vast Nazi death camp in southern Poland marks a change in the long-standing approach to maintaining the site, which has been left as the Allies found it when they liberated the camp at the end of World War II.

But two of the gas chambers are slowly sinking into the ground and will likely slide out of sight within the next two decades if nothing is done. How to save them prompted debate on the council, with a majority favoring a Polish expert's proposal to halt the erosion by building walls sunk into the ground on either side of the slipping chambers.

The council also backed a proposal to renovate an aging exhibition dating back to the early years of communist rule in Poland.

Piotr Cywinski, the new director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum said the exhibition, in austere

barracks at the sprawling complex, has become old-fashioned compared to modern museums like Yad Vashem in Israel and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

Some Holocaust survivors in Israel fear modernization could make the camp seem more like a museum and damage the somberness of the site where nearly 1.5 million people, most of them Jews, were slaughtered by the Nazis.

Cywinski said no changes would be made to the remaining crematoria, barracks and watchtowers, and he pledged to keep the powerful exhibits of hair, glasses and other personal belongings that were stripped from victims.

Possible changes include building an educational center and introducing audio-guide tours — though Cywinski promised the place would not become "technological or multimedia."

Several Nazi camp sites, including Bergen-Belsen, have received makeovers, which experts say is part of a trend to make them more attractive for tourists. Some feel similar renovations at Auschwitz will to make the Nazi's largest camp seem less foreboding.

SPIELBERG CHALLENGES HOLOCAUST DENIERS WITH DOCUMENTARY

Steven Spielberg presented a documentary about the Nazi massacre of tens of thousands of Jews at the Babi Yar ravine in Ukraine, several weeks after Ukraine marked the 65th anniversary of the tragedy.

The film by Ukrainian director Serhiy Bukovsky, "Spell Your Name," for which Spielberg co-executive, produced, contains the testimony of Jewish survivors who escaped brutal execution and those who rescued friends and neighbors during the Holocaust.

"The stories and experience of survivors in Ukraine need to be seen and heard by the people of the world, who may not know what happened in Ukraine during the Holocaust,"

Spielberg said at a news conference.

"I really believe that listening to the stories of Holocaust survivors from all around the world is going to change the world and already has in many ways," Spielberg said.

The film was produced by the USC Shoah Foundation Institute, a Los Angeles-based organization founded by Spielberg in 1994.

The director has produced several documentaries on the Holocaust, including 1996's "Survivors of the Holocaust," 1998's "The Last Days," 2000's "Eyes of the Holocaust" and 2004's "Voices from the List." His "Schindler's List" won seven Academy Awards in 1994.

ITALIAN INSURANCE FIRM SETTLES NAZI-ERA INSURANCE SUIT

Italy's leading insurer, *Generali*, has settled a class-action suit over insurance policies issued to thousands of Holocaust victims, following years of conflict with Jewish survivors and action groups.

Generali was one of the biggest insurers in eastern Europe before World War Two, and its insurance policies were popular with the Jewish community to provide for marriage dowries and schooling for their children.

U.S. law firm Kohn, Swift and Graf said in a statement posted on its web site that the settlement covered all individuals or their ancestors who purchased a Generali policy between 1920 and 1945 and still held it at the time of the Nazi persecutions.

The lawsuit alleged that *Generali* withheld the proceeds of the insurance poli-

cies during the Holocaust and refused to pay or give any information on the policies afterward.

The settlement includes all claims received by the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims, as well as new ones. The law firm did not give an estimate of how much the claims could be worth.

All those seeking compensation have until March 31, 2007 to file a claim form (www.nazierainsurancesettlement.com). Many European insurers and banks have been involved in lawsuits over assets seized during the Holocaust. The law firm said individuals who had already received compensation from Generali for their policy would not be eligible for further compensation resulting from the settlement.

HOLOCAUST CENTER CONSTRUCTION UNDER WAY IN MAINE

Construction has begun on the Michael Klahr Center on the campus of the University of Maine at Augusta, which will be the new home of the Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine (HHRC). Since its inception in 1985, HHRC staff worked from home offices and finally, after twenty years, a permanent home for the HHRC is being built.

The Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine and the University of Maine at Augusta sponsored an anonymous international design competition that resulted in 124 submissions from around the world. The winning design is by Harold Hon and Son Wooten of Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbott and is inspired by a flower, a symbol of life, beauty and renewal.

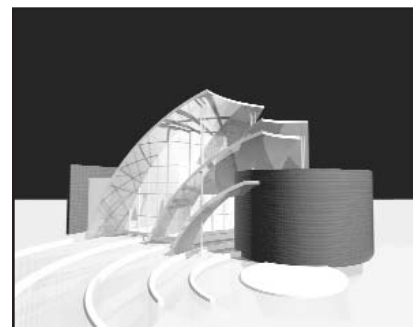
The new resource center will have classrooms, both permanent and temporary exhibit space, a resource room with

multi-media equipment, and staff offices. The University will maintain the facility as part of its unique partnership with the HHRC. Working with the University, the HHRC will strengthen its educational, cultural and outreach programming.

The new resource center will host: annual week-long summer seminars for educators, workshops for students and educators, student tours, diversity leadership institutes for teenagers, film and music workshops, lectures, and community events.

The HHRC's Education Resource Center is named in memory of Michael Klahr, who was a child survivor of the Holocaust. Brooklynite Phyllis Jalbert, formerly of Maine, has given the HHRC a generous gift to honor Klahr, her late husband, who died from cancer in 1998.

The Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine has raised more than \$1.8 million towards its goal of \$3 million.



Architectural design of the Michael Klahr Center



BOOK REVIEWS

THE GI'S RABBI: WORLD WAR II LETTERS OF DAVID MAX

The GI's Rabbi: World War II Letters of David Max Eichhorn.

Edited by Greg Palmer & Mark S. Zaid. Introduction by Doris L. Bergen. University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 2004. 260 pp. \$29.95

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

"Every man who has been oppressed must and will be restored to his family and to his rightful place in society. This is a promise and a pledge which I bring to you from your American comrades-in-arms and your Jewish brethren across the seas."

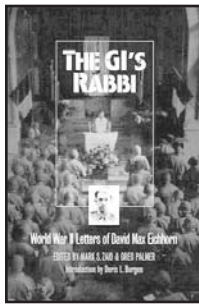
From a speech delivered by David Max Eichhorn, Chaplain XV Corps, U.S. Army, at the first Shabbat service in Dachau, May, 1945.

At first glance this book, *The GI's Rabbi: World War II Letters of David Max Eichhorn*, edited by Greg Palmer and Mark S. Zaid, seems to be simply about an American-Jewish rabbi who devotedly served his country and his men. But it is about much more. And this "much more" will make it of particular interest to readers of *M&R*.

We will most especially note how from

July, 1944, the moment Rabbi Eichhorn landed in Normandy, his dedication to his men was matched only by his dedicated determination to find and help any and all Jewish survivors of Hitler's brutalities. For as Rabbi Eichhorn traveled with the soldiers of the XV U.S. Army Corps, ministering to their needs, he was also always "asking people in the various cities and villages through which [they] . . . passed, 'Are there any Jewish people here?'" Tragically, more often than not the answer was, no. But, every now and then — joyous and incredulous — someone would rush up to his "little jeep with the big *Magen David*" . . .

We will most especially note the lengths to which Rabbi Eichhorn went to help the survivors he met while traveling. How often, in fact, he raised money and collected food from his own men to give them. Indeed, his men recognized the desperate need and were more than eager to help. Later, stationed for a longer period in Paris, Rabbi Eichhorn would work with the



Joint Distribution Committee, "the American Red Cross, the French Red Cross, the French *Secour Nationale*, the American Army, and all the various appendages thereof to improve conditions for the surviving Jews there. Later still, in Austria, he would do much the same for the displaced in that country, working with other groups.

Finally, and poignantly, we will most especially note how Rabbi Eichhorn organized and conducted "the first Jewish religious service" — a Shabbat service — at the Dachau concentration camp, one week after it was liberated. The service "was attended by every Jewish male and female whose health permitted." There were touching speeches given. "The Ark was opened and" Rabbi Eichhorn, "recited '*Shehecheyanu*' . . . '*benshed Gomef*' and went through a brief Torah service." The Rabbi gave a heartrending speech. (An excerpt is offered above). There was the singing of "*God Bless America*" and "*Ha-tikva*." In short, there was joy and lots of tears. And all this happened, even as American troops guarded the perimeter of the area. Unfortunately, there was reason to fear anti-Semitic actions . . .

Of course, others reading this volume will especially appreciate the many things

Rabbi Eichhorn did for his own men. How he counseled all the soldiers. How he prayed with all of them. How he made sure there were High Holiday services for Jewish soldiers, even if that meant doing a major clean-up of a synagogue damaged and desecrated by the Nazis. How he diligently distributed matza from off the back of his little jeep Passover time. How he made sure burial was proper for all. How he wrote compassionately to all parents consoling them for dreadful losses . . .

In sum then, Rabbi Eichhorn's letters, strategically and wisely augmented by his sermons and other writings, tell us much . . . from a new perspective . . . from a man who cared . . . about a traumatic and unforgettable time period we all still grapple with to fully comprehend.

Interestingly, Rabbi Eichhorn would write that his wartime goal was to be "a good soldier and a good rabbi." Readers of this book will all quickly agree he more than attained his goal!

A *postscript*: For those interested, Rabbi Eichhorn's first service at Dachau was filmed by George Stevens of the U.S. Army Signal Corps.

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

SAVING THE JEWS

Saving the Jews. Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Holocaust.

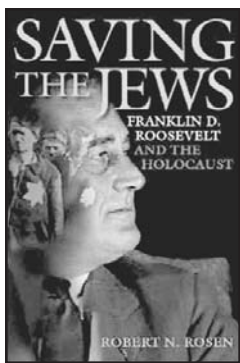
By Robert N. Rosen. Foreword by Gerhard Weinberg and Afterword by Alan M. Dershowitz. New York, Thunder's Mouth Press, 2006. 654 pp. \$32.00

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

The author of *Saving the Jews*, lawyer and historian Robert N. Rosen of Charleston, South Carolina, defiantly attempts in a well-researched and highly readable tome to save the tarnished reputation of President Franklin D. Roosevelt regarding the tragic fate of European Jewry during WWII. Rosen's interest in this complex theme piqued in 2001 when he visited with his daughter Ali, then a student at Andover's Phillips Academy, the Holocaust Memorial in downtown Boston. They both were baffled by the etched message: "By late 1942, the United States and its allies were aware of the death camps but did nothing to destroy them."

The New Deal president, who was much admired by that era's Jews as an iconic figure, has come under criticism by scholars for his alleged failure to do more for Europe's doomed Jews. Rosen laboriously examines the context in which FDR operated with its variety of pressures, claiming that he tried his best to first defeat Nazism and thus save as many Jews as possible. In addition, the president had to overcome an isolationist America with anti-Semitic tendencies to boot. Hitler's goal of world domination

(Continued on page 15)



STEALING TO SETTLE A SCORE WITH LIFE

The Book Thief. By Markus Zusak. Random House Children's Books, 2006. 560 pp. \$24.95

REVIEWED BY JANET MASLIN

Markus Zusak has not really written "Harry Potter and the Holocaust." It just feels that way. "*The Book Thief*" is perched on the cusp between grown-up and young-adult fiction, and it is loaded with librarian appeal. It deplores human misery. It celebrates the power of language. It may encourage adolescents to read. It has an element of the fanciful. And it's a book that bestows a self-congratulatory glow upon anyone willing to grapple with it.

"*The Book Thief*" resembles other, better novels that have been widely popular. Its roundabout approach to the Holocaust suggests "Everything Is Illuminated" Lite. Its embattled, feisty young heroine has a Potterish appeal as she makes her way through a mystifying adult world. There is a Vonnegut whimsy to the mordant turns of fate here. And Mr. Zusak's narrator offers constant manipulative asides, as in the clever Lemony Snicket books, although in this case wit is not much of an option. The narrator is Death.

How can a tale told by Death be mistaken for young-adult storytelling? Easily: because this book's narrator is sorry for what he has to do. "To me, war is like the new boss who expects the impossible," he confides, on one of many occasions when he campaigns to win readers' approval. "You see?" he says, about the demise of one of the book's best-liked characters. "Even death has a heart."

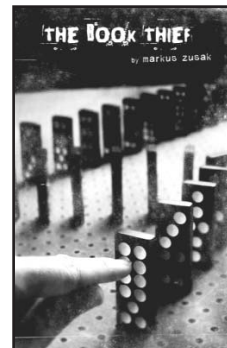
The youthful sensibility of "*The Book Thief*" also contributes to a wider innocence. While it is set in Germany during World War II and is not immune to bloodshed, most of this story is figurative: it unfolds as symbolic or metaphorical abstraction. The dominoes lined up on its cover are compared to falling bodies. The book thief of the title is a schoolgirl named

Liesel Meminger, and the meaning of her stealing is not left unexplained. She has been robbed of a brother, who dies at the start of the book. Her mother disappears, and then Liesel is left in foster care. A great deal has been taken away from her. She steals books to settle the score.

The first book taken by Liesel offers a sampling of Mr. Zusak's real but easily oversold charm. It is called "*The Grave Digger's Handbook*," and is subtitled "*A Twelve-Step Guide to Grave-Digging Success*." Liesel finds it at the cemetery where her brother is buried. And it becomes her link to the past, even after she is put in the care of Rosa and Hans Hubermann, whose household is colorful to the point of dangerous whimsy. Hans finds life-affirming ways to play the accordion, for example.

Liesel lives in a town called Molching, which is close enough to Munich for its residents to see Jews being sent to the Dachau concentration camp nearby. Since Liesel is Lutheran, she is not in any danger of sharing this fate, although the effects of the war on Germans are strongly felt. But Liesel finds herself forced into a Hitler Youth uniform. And perversely, the Führer's "*Mein Kampf*" becomes one of the books that are important in her life.

Mr. Zusak does his imaginative best to make sure that no Nazi touchstone like "*Mein Kampf*" is treated in a predictable way. Hitler's book first helps to save a young Jewish man named Max Vandenburg, who is hidden by the Hubermanns. Then, with its pages turned blank by white paint, it is transformed into an entirely different book altogether. And it



helps to forge an everlasting connection between Liesel and Max.

"*The Book Thief*" is a long, winding tale, punctuated by Death's commentary. ("By the way — I like this human idea of the grim reaper. I like the scythe. It amuses me.") Most of it is confined to Molching and has a coyly claustrophobic outlook. As Liesel and her best friend, Rudy Steiner, trade dubious endearments (most of which translate as "You filthy pig!"), they also commit small, meaningful acts of defiance against the Nazi regime. Even transgressions as tiny as the stealing of apples are woven and reweaved into the story.

"So much good, so much evil," Death says of human nature. "Just add water." Beyond its many variations on that idea, "*The Book Thief*" adds up to a string of anecdotes that are tinged with quiet horror. At its most effective, the book's tone can be terrifyingly matter of fact. "For the book thief, everything was going nicely," Death observes, as the extermination camps flourish in the summer of 1942. "For me, the sky was the color of Jews."

It's possible to be overwhelmed and impressed by such moments in Mr. Zusak's novel. It's also possible to wish there were more of them, that their impact were sharper, and that the book were less fussy, more certain of its own strength.

To be sure, "*The Book Thief*" attempts and achieves great final moments of tear-jerking sentiment. And Liesel is a fine heroine, a memorably strong and dauntless girl. But for every startlingly rebellious episode there are moments that are slack.

"*The Book Thief*" will be appreciated for Mr. Zusak's audacity, also on display in his earlier "*I Am the Messenger*." It will be widely read and admired because it tells a story in which books become treasures. And because there's no arguing with a sentiment like that.

First published in *The New York Times*

ANTI-SEMITISM THREATENS GERMANY'S JEWISH LIFE

BY MADELINE CHAMBERS

The first rabbi to be ordained in Germany since the Holocaust is so worried about being identified as a Jew that he often wears a baseball hat over his skull cap.

"It's a fact — it isn't smart to display I'm Jewish. This is a problem and we have to face it," German-born Daniel Alter, 47, told Reuters in an interview.

He is worried about neo-Nazi attacks and says anti-Semitism in Germany — still tortured by memories of the Holocaust in which Nazis wiped out 6 million Jews — puts the growth of Jewish communities here at risk.

As a Jew he feels unsafe in several German cities, not all in former communist east Germany where the far-right National Democratic Party (NPD) has made electoral gains recently.

Alter, whose father survived Auschwitz concentration camp, dismissed talk in the German media of a possible blossoming of Jewish life in Germany.

Jewish schools, theatres and shops have sprung up but Germany's Jewish communities will never compare to those in Britain or the United States, says Alter,

who serves in the northern towns of Oldenburg and Delmenhorst.

"We are building something on the ruins, on the scars left behind but it'll be something different," he said.

"I don't think there is any way to bring back the Jewish life and culture we had here. Ever."



German-born Jewish rabbi Daniel Alter

That Germany has about four times as many Jews as it did 15 years ago is due to immigrants from the former Soviet Union who account for most of the 105,000 registered Jews, he says.

The rabbi does not expect the number of Jews in Germany to rise much and says anti-Semitism is a factor.

"If anti-Semitism grows, people might leave," he said.

The number of far-right offences in Germany, many of which were anti-Semitic, jumped 20 percent in the first eight months of 2006, according to the latest available police data.

Last year activists burnt Holocaust victim Anne Frank's diaries and made a teenager wear a sign saying he was a Jew. Many Jewish establishments have police guards and a German all-Jewish football team suffers weekly abuse.

The latest figures prompted Chancellor Angela Merkel to condemn the rise in right-wing violence and urge Germans to fight it.

But Alter is not interested in statistics.

"I go on how I feel. I might have felt safer 20 years ago. Now the right-wingers dare to claim the streets."

"There is racism and anti-Jewish senti-

ment all over the world but I have the impression that societies in other countries deal with it differently. We would feel better if German society changed its approach."

He said society had to show it does not tolerate right-wing extremism and a ban of the NPD could send a signal. Germany already has tough laws against offences such as Holocaust denial and using the Nazi swastika symbol.

He notes how before the 1930s, Germany's 600,000 Jews identified with the country they had lived in for generations and supplied some of its greatest minds.

"Jewish cultural heritage was part of German cultural heritage and Jewish people were German patriots — soldiers who fell in World War One didn't imagine what would happen later."

His parents cannot talk about the Holocaust and Alter's bond with Germany is complex. "Would you identify with a country where much of your family and culture had been wiped out?"

"My dream in the long run is to live in Jerusalem."

First published on scotsman.com

WHEN REMEMBRANCE FAILS

BY EFFRAIM ZUROFF, *Israel director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center*

Since 2000, anti-Semitism in Western Europe — and the Muslim world — has virtually monopolized the agendas of the Jewish defense agencies, but recent events in Poland, Croatia, Lithuania and Romania seem to indicate that we should start paying more attention to what is happening in Eastern Europe.

And while it has been well known for years that Jew-hatred continues to be a serious problem in Russia and the former Soviet republics which have not been admitted to NATO and/or the European Union, it is generally assumed in Israel and the West that those countries which have achieved membership in those bodies, or are close to obtaining entry, have fully adopted liberal and democratic norms, leaving behind their centuries-old anti-Semitic traditions and prejudices.

So the following incidents probably come as a surprise to those unacquainted with the current situation.

In late May, Rabbi Michael Schudrich, the chief rabbi of Warsaw and Lodz, was physically attacked by extremist Polish nationalists on a main street in Warsaw while walking home from Shabbat services.

Two weeks later, under the exact same circumstances, Rabbi Zvi Aloni was physically accosted by Croatian neo-Nazis in the center of Zagreb, not far from the synagogue and local community headquarters. In addition, the community received an e-mail in which a Croatian student from Split threatened to blow up the community center with the help of Hamas.

On the weekend of June 23-25, about 20 tombstones were vandalized in the main Jewish cemetery in Vilna. Less than a week before this incident, a pre-trial investigation was launched by the Office of the Prosecutor-General of Lithuania against none other than Dr. Yitzhak Arad, former chairman of the Yad Vashem directorate, on the suspicion of war crimes committed while serving with Soviet anti-Nazi partisans in World War II.

In Romania, right-wing newspapers have falsely accused Marco Katz, director

of the Center for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism, of threatening the lives of an Orthodox priest and his children to force the removal of a statue honoring World War II dictator Marshal Antonescu, who was responsible for the murder of hundreds of thousands of Romanian Jews.

The common denominator of all these recent incidents is their link to the Holocaust and the local anti-Semitic traditions which spawned active complicity by the local population in the murders. Thus the date on which the cemetery in Vilna was vandalized is the day of the Nazi invasion to Lithuania, which Lithuanians mark as the beginning of their ostensible (and in fact practically nonexistent) resistance to the Soviets, while for Jews who refuse to celebrate, it marks the onset of the annihilation.

Rabbi Schudrich was attacked by Poles yelling "Poland for Poles," the slogan of the anti-Semitic prewar political power called the National Democrats (*Endecja*), whose hostility to their Jewish neighbors was a contributing factor to the relatively limited assistance extended by Poles to Jews during the Holocaust. Rabbi Aloni's attackers yelled the standard Nazi call of *Juden Raus* (Jews out!), and in the case of Arad, it seems fairly clear that the charges against him are a direct response to his recent expert testimony against Lithuanian Nazi war criminals.

Thus, the memory of the Holocaust, which in Central and Western Europe continues to serve as an antidote to anti-Semitism and racism, is serving the opposite purpose east of the Elbe, where post-Soviet and post-communist regimes were only able to honestly face the complicity of their nationals in Holocaust crimes after achieving independence and/or democracy.

This development also forced them to face the practical issues related to their Holocaust history which have proven to be extremely unpopular. National leaders were called upon to acknowledge guilt and apologize for crimes (usually to the State of Israel), and governments were expected to commemorate the victims, prosecute the perpetrators, accurately record their Holocaust history, return con-

fiscated property and introduce the Holocaust as part of the school curriculum.

Two factors, however, made the implementation of these tasks particularly difficult. The first was that the local population in every one of these countries had actively assisted the Nazis in the mass murder of the Jews. The second was the rapidly growing awareness of the importance of the universal significance of the events of the Holocaust and the increased sensitivity to Holocaust-related issues in NATO and the European Union.

These factors made it virtually imperative for the post-communist countries, who more than anything else sought membership in these bodies, to ostensibly accept the obligation to address their Holocaust past despite their lack of ability, and the absence of local political support, to do so.

Fifteen years of independence later, therefore, relatively little practical progress has been made. While many of the leaders of those countries have apologized for local participation in Holocaust crimes — usually in Israel, not at home — and made declarations which ostensibly obligate them to deal with all the practical Holocaust-related issues, very few Nazi war criminals have been prosecuted, and in countries like Lithuania, one of the few to convict, none of those convicted have been punished.

Under these circumstances, the events of the recent months are hardly surprising. In fact, if they are not dealt with promptly and stringently by the local authorities, they will only encourage additional anti-Semitic incidents.

But it must be clear that the physical violence and vandalization of the recent months are only the tip of the iceberg of unresolved Holocaust issues that continue to cast their ominous shadow over Jewish life in Eastern Europe. Thus, until more serious progress is made by post-communist countries in honestly facing their World War II past, we are likely to see even worse manifestations of these deeply ingrained problems.

First published in *Jerusalem Post*

DETECTIVE WORK UNCOVERS NAZIS IN US

BY JAMES VICINI (*Reuters*)

Painstaking detective work, scouring historical records and an occasional lucky break have helped the U.S. government solve some of the coldest cases of the Holocaust era and find more than 100 Nazi collaborators.

"You get to put together some of the most intricate detective puzzles," said Eli Rosenbaum, director of the U.S. Justice Department's Nazi-hunting Office of Special Investigations.

"We've got the coldest cases of all," he said, using the police phrase for old, unsolved cases. "If you can prove one of these cases, you can do just about anything."

He described how his investigators discovered Elfriede Rinkel, a San Francisco woman sent back to Germany last year after admitting she served as a guard at its *Ravensbruck* concentration camp during World War Two.

The U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington obtained copies of the personnel cards from the concentration camp as part of its efforts to preserve Holocaust records and shared them with his office, Rosenbaum said.

Of the 1,000 names, his investigators found that the 83-year-old German native and citizen was the only one living in the United States. They did further research on her responsibilities at the camp for female prisoners.

As part of the investigation "we Googled her name," Rosenbaum said. The researchers found an article in a Jewish newspaper about the death in 2004 of her husband, a German Jew and a Holocaust survivor.

Rosenbaum interviewed Rinkel about a year ago and asked whether she ever told her husband about what she did during the war. "She waved it off and said, 'Yes, but he wasn't interested.'" But he said Rinkel now claims she never told her husband.

She was the first woman deported since

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SURVIVORS' CORNER

PEBBLES FROM THE "KINDERTRANSPORT"

BY LORRAINE AHEARN

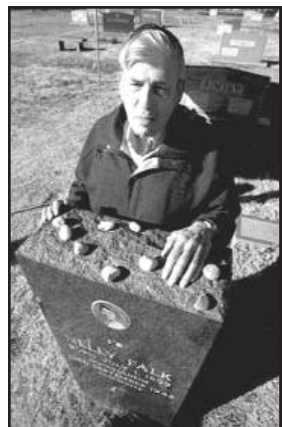
Nelly Falk may be the only person to perish in Auschwitz who has a tombstone in Greensboro. No remains. Just a stone, showing someone here remembered.

That person is her son, Walter. And in contrast to his mother's desolate fate, the tale of how he was spared the same demise is one dim shaft of daylight that penetrated, briefly, the black vault of the Holocaust.

His is the forgotten interlude of the "Kindertransport," which delivered Walter Falk and some 10,000 other Jewish children from the jaws of Nazi Germany to England.

The story is bittersweet, like the dark chocolates that Falk, 79, arranges on a china plate for his afternoon coffee. On one hand, he cannot escape the fact that his mother, a small, careful woman who could not bear to leave her elderly parents in Germany, was meanwhile taken on a cattle car to the death camp in Poland in September 1942 and herded into a gas chamber — one of 6 million to die, including 1.5 million children. But there is the paradox: Before the curtain of night fell on Germany, strangers swooped in and snatched these 10,000 to safety. Which is how Falk lived to be an old man, to pour his coffee and tell the tale in the quiet of his Greensboro kitchen. "It's an unanswered question," he begins, in his still-thick Black Forest accent. "Some people say, 'The good Lord wanted it that way.' Other people would say, 'Where was the good Lord when they killed all those people? All my life, bad things happened around me. And still, here I am.'"

"Bad things," to be sure, didn't begin with *Kristallnacht*, the 1938 pogrom in which Jewish men were rounded up in cities across Germany, synagogues



Walter Falk at his mother's tombstone

burned and so many Jewish shops' windows smashed that it was literally called "crystal night." No, even in the small city of Karlsruhe, where 11-year-old Walter Falk lived with his widowed mother, the storm was approaching.

Already, they'd been evicted from their lovely, terraced apartment because a Nazi Party member moved in next door. Falk was sent to a segregated school for Jewish children, on the grounds of an insane asylum.

Yet, until *Kristallnacht*, the well-to-do Jews who went back centuries in Germany engendered hope that it wouldn't last, that it might blow over. That fragile illusion shattered like glass on Nov. 9, 1938.

Falk's makeshift school had dismissed early, and he returned home to find the picture windows of the Jewish shoe store downstairs broken, new shoes strewn about in the street.

Upstairs, his mother was crying. Nazis had raided the home, pulled curtains and paintings off the walls, looking for a safe. Finding nothing, they left. Clearly, they would be back.

Some were lucky. Falk's uncle, a "nogoodnik" who played cards with police friends, was tipped off to buy a train ticket to Basel, Switzerland, and return safely the next day. Another of Falk's adult male relatives wasn't lucky. He was taken to Dachau, the concentration camp near Munich.

"He must have said something wrong," Falk said. "He came home in a cigar box."

Falk and his mother left for his grandparents' country village, where it was calm, for now. But immediately, Falk's mother set about finding the boy a way out of Germany.

He applied for an exit visa to Palestine — a route the Nazis regime actually encouraged before the war. Palestine was a British protectorate. Sending Jews there was a way for Germany to antagonize England.

But through a friend, Falk's mother learned of the kindertransport program, which had gotten the stamp of approval from Neville Chamberlain, the British prime minister better known for one of history's blunders.

Seeking to appease Adolf Hitler and avert another world war, it was Chamberlain who left Berlin with a "non-aggression pact," a worthless piece of paper, it turned out, because Germany invaded Poland a year later.

But it was in that window between *Kristallnacht* and the march into Poland Sept. 1, 1939 that Falk boarded one of

the trains that traveled through Holland to a ferry across the English Channel. An estimated 10,000 Jewish youths were sheltered in England for the duration of the war. Some lived adopted families; others, like Falk, in a series of hostels and homes for children, such as the Balfour estate in Scotland.

In the U.S., there had also been a Children's Rescue Bill introduced in Congress to provide a temporary safe haven for Jewish children age 14 and under, but the bill never got out of committee.

Despite an outpouring from the American public of offers to shelter children, a coalition of immigration opponents lobbied against the effort. Publicly, they testified that the rescue bill would cause the country to be "flooded with foreigners" and people

"who could never be loyal to the United States."

Privately, however, opposition to the rescue bill wasn't strictly out of fear that the children would endanger the U.S. In his diary, now housed in the

National Archives, a highly-placed State Department diplomat, J. Pierrepont Moffat, recalled a conversation at a cocktail party for the Washington elite.

"The problem with the (child rescue) bill," Moffat quoted the wife of then U.S. Commissioner of Immigration James Hougheling as saying, "was that 20,000 children would all too soon grow up into

(Continued on page 14)



Pebbles of memory

A SHOAH SURVIVOR WRITES ABOUT HIS MIRACLES

BY LARRY LUXNER, JTA

On his 68th birthday, Jorge Klainman decided he could remain silent no more about his Holocaust horrors.

The Polish-born, retired businessman sat at his electric typewriter, he said, "and suddenly the curtains of my memory began to part, revealing events that happened 50 or 60 years ago. After that, my life changed completely. I felt liberated."

The result was "El Septimo Milagro," a harrowing Spanish-language tale of life and death in a series of Nazi concentration camps that has captivated readers from Buenos Aires to Barcelona.

Translated into English as "*The Seventh Miracle*" and into Hebrew as "*Nes Ha-Shev'i*," Klainman's first-person account differs from most other Holocaust memoirs in its extraordinary attention to detail. It ranges from the 1939 roundup of Jews from his Polish hometown of Kielce to Klainman's frightful March 1944 encounter with psychopathic concentration camp commandant Amon Goeth, the SS officer portrayed by Ralph Fiennes in Steven Spielberg's movie "Schindler's List."

Goeth marked Klainman, then 15, for execution by firing squad.

"My mind refused to comprehend the

reality of what was happening," Klainman wrote. "The end had come. They were going to shoot me and burn me. I thought of my loved ones, and that soon I would be joining them. I reached a state of mind where I just wanted, with all my being, to get it over with."

But Klainman's Ukrainian executioners somehow missed their target, and later that night fellow Jewish prisoners risked their lives to bring his bleeding body to the camp infirmary. A kindly doctor there gradually nursed the teenager back to health.

Fate intervened five more times before he was liberated by American soldiers in 1945, and Klainman was saved from certain death.

In 1947 — with the help of international Jewish organizations — Klainman set sail from Italy to Rio de Janeiro, caught a plane to Asuncion, Paraguay, and smuggled himself across the heavily guarded border into Argentina, where he eventually married and raised a family.

"Six actual miracles occurred and saved

my life," according to Klainman, 78. "The seventh was my being able to write the story."

And now, with anti-Semitism again rising throughout his adopted country, Klainman feels compelled to share that story with Argentines who may not have yet gotten the message.

"Ten years from now, there won't be any Holocaust survivors left to transmit the truth to young people," he said in an interview at his Buenos Aires apartment. "They'll begin forgetting the

Jewish Holocaust, just as they've forgotten the Armenian Holocaust. So it's important that everybody knows what happened. That way they'll be able to understand the terrible struggle of the Israeli people against the fundamentalist Islamic savages who want to throw us into the sea."

Klainman, a jewelry retailer by profession, lived in Tel Aviv from 1971 to 1990 and again from 1999 to 2004. He is fluent in Polish, Russian, German, Yiddish,

Hebrew, Spanish and Italian, and was recently appointed official representative of the Holocaust Museum in Buenos Aires.

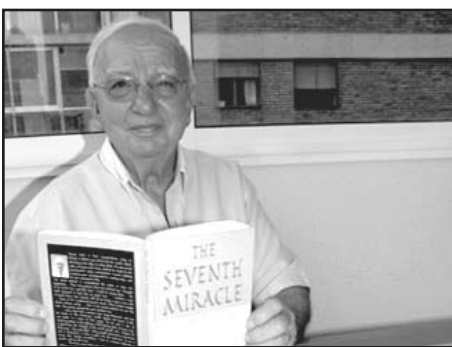
"I've dedicated the rest of my life to explaining the Shoah to students from all over the country," he said. "Since I've moved back from Israel, thousands of students have heard my testimony."

Klainman says he has "lots of work to do" in explaining the reasons behind the Holocaust to fellow Argentines, many of whom grew up with anti-Semitic attitudes encouraged by the Roman Catholic Church and the thousands of Nazi war criminals who were welcomed by Argentina's military dictatorship after World War II.

"I've visited many colleges and universities throughout Argentina, giving speeches for high-school kids," Klainman said. "I even spoke at a Catholic seminary, and afterwards the kids cursed the Vatican for ignoring the Jews."

"Usually when I finish speaking, after an hour, for three or four minutes they sit there in silence. Then they surround me, hundreds of kids, hugging me, crying, asking for my autograph. Once I took a taxi in Corrientes and the driver recognized me. He took my hand and kissed it,

(Continued on page 15)



Argentine Holocaust survivor and writer Jorge Klainman holds a copy of his book, "*The Seventh Miracle*."

“VERDICT ON AUSCHWITZ”

BY TOM TUGEND, JTA

The name Auschwitz has become synonymous with the horrors of the Holocaust.

How did Auschwitz-Birkenau function as a 24/7 annihilation camp, and who were the men who operated the gears and levers of the killing machine?

A glimpse of the answers is found in “Verdict on Auschwitz: The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, 1963-1965.”

The three-hour documentary capsulizes one of the longest trials in German history. It lasted 20 months and included 22 defendants, 360 witnesses from 19 countries and batteries of lawyers, and was covered by 200 journalists. The presiding judge’s reading of the verdict took 11 hours.

Filmmakers Rolf Bickel and Dietrich Wagner culled their material from 430 hours of original audiotapes of the trial. They discovered the tapes in the basement of a Frankfurt courthouse.

On the defendants’ bank sat 22 former SS men, now paunchy and middle-aged in sober civilian suits. These were not the big shots like Auschwitz commandants Rudolf Hoess or Arthur Liebehenschel, who were executed in Poland shortly after the war.

Rather, they were the middle- to low-level functionaries, the hands-on torturers and killers, who had distinguished themselves by their brutality and dedication to the job at hand.

One was Wilhelm Boger, an SS political officer and inventor of the Boger-Swing torture device, on which the genitals of prisoners were smashed.

Another was Josef Klehr, an illiterate medical orderly who strutted about impersonating a doctor and killed thousands through phenol injections.

Otto Kaduk, a Zyklon B handler, described the operation of the gas chambers with an engineer’s precision. Until his arrest he had been operating an old age home.

By the nature of the subject, this is a difficult, often agonizing film to watch, with few light moments. One is inadvertently supplied by defense attorney Hans Latenser, who gives new meaning to the word *chutzpah*.

Latenser argues that the SS men who

took part in the selection process as the trains pulled into the camp actually saved lives by assigning some of the men and women to forced labor. If his clients hadn’t done so, the attorney proposes, all the arrivals would have been killed immediately.

At the end of the trial, six defendants were given life sentences and three were acquitted. The rest were sentenced to prison terms ranging from three to 14 years.

For all its historical and educational value, the trial, and by extension the film, lacks one important dimension.

While Auschwitz-Birkenau was certainly a killing field for vast numbers of Roma, or Gypsies, Soviet prisoners of war and political offenders, the vast majority of victims were Jews.

Yet in focusing on the nuts and bolts on how Auschwitz functioned, the victims fade into the background. This missing aspect may lie partly in the legal mechanics of the trial, but also reflects the reluctance of the West and East German governments in the 1960s to fully confront the Jewish dimension of the Final Solution.



An Auschwitz gas chamber, as seen in the documentary film “Verdict on Auschwitz.”

THEIR PRIVATE HOLOCAUST

BY RONIT ROCCAS

Yoram Mor was 9 years old (his name was Jerzy Mieczek then) when the Germans invaded Poland. Four years later, at the end of 1943, his family – his father, his mother, he and his sister – found shelter in the home of a Polish family that lived in a village near Warsaw. Mor already knew then that the shelter was given to them not only in return for money, but also thanks to the affair that the woman had conducted with his father. “I knew when my father got out of bed and went to the Polish woman,” relates Mor in “*Quilt of Time*” by Hanna Ezer-Ulitzky, which was published by *Gvanim* with the help of Yad Vashem and the Amos Fund of the President’s House. “This was part of the price we paid for staying there.” However, some time later, the father was murdered by the Germans and the woman who was hiding them demanded they leave. Mor was already 14, his sister Joanna was only 7 and their mother realized there was no way of keeping them together and alive. She decided to send her son to work for a Polish farmer, but first she asked him to take his sister and leave her in the street; perhaps someone would take pity on the orphan, who had a crucifix placed around her neck, and take her in.

The interview with Joanna, now Ilana Nachshoni, appears in the book immediately after the conversation with Mor. “Snow, December, bitter cold,” she relates. “They leave a small girl in the street ... No one knew for sure what would happen ... I went back to the house we had left. I remember that. The woman said to me, ‘Your mother isn’t here any more!’ ... Today I know that my mother jumped into the river. I can’t free myself of my anger towards her. Why did you jump into the river? You were a nurse. You could have put on a nurse’s uniform and gone to a hospital and looked for work. You could have at least tried. In any case you jumped to your death, at least you could

have tried ... To leave small children like that?!”

During the course of two years, 2003-2005, Ezer-Ulitzky interviewed 32 men and women who were children during the Holocaust, and in every case survived in monasteries, convents or the homes of Christians without their parents at their side. Mor is the eldest of them; the youngest are David Frishbein (Horoczek), who was born in 1941 in Dubnow, in Poland-Ukraine, and the twins Shosh Ram and Tammy Shoham, who were born that same year in the ghetto in a town near Vilna.

Ezer-Ulitzky is neither a historian nor from a family that went through the Holocaust. She is 72, was born in Israel, has been a widow for a year and a half and lives in Hofit. She has a master’s degree in history and the philosophy of education, and in the past ran therapeutic workshops in interpersonal relations, dealing with stress situations, among other things. The idea of interviewing survivors who were children at the time was suggested to her by Dr. Nachum Bogner, who five years ago published the book “*At the Mercy of Strangers*” (Hebrew, Yad Vashem) – a study of children who survived in Polish territory, most of them thanks to a borrowed Polish identity.

The idea was that Ezer-Ulitzky, a contemporary of the survivors, would focus on something that Bogner and others have not dealt with in depth – the histories of these children after they arrived in Israel, the process of their absorption and the ways in which they have chosen to fulfill themselves despite the difficulties, the residues and, above all, the series of separations that in most cases did not end even after the war.

“I received three names from Dr. Bogner,” relates Ezer-Ulitzky, “and it moved on from there. I went to see all of them – from Kiryat Gat to Kiryat Motzkin – and had I wanted to interview more people, there would have been no problem. I stopped this at a stage at which I had at

least 10 more people, and I have no doubt that it would have grown. It is important for me to say: Everyone I interviewed is in the book; I didn’t make any selection. Everyone who opened himself to me – I felt that he deserved the respect of having his story told. Initially, I interviewed the people and I didn’t know what I would do with it, I didn’t have any organization behind me, and I wasn’t even sure that there would be a book, but the way was important to me. People opened up to me. There were those who recounted all the details, as they appear in the book, for the first time in their lives. They wanted people to know what had happened to them after the war, what some of them called ‘my private Holocaust.’”

SEPARATION AFTER SEPARATION

Rivka Yisraeli, then Rena Motyl, was 3 years old when the Germans occupied Poland. Like most of the interviewees, her memory plays tricks on her. She remembers some things well; others have been forgotten and erased, and she has needed long years of life in order to try to reconstruct the years in which she was passed from hand to hand. Like many of the interviewees, even today she experiences the loss of her parents with a force that entirely overwhelms her, and especially the moving from place to place, from person to person, after the war. “Like a package,” she says. “They took me, the package, and returned me to the Christians because they, my relatives, went to Mexico.”

The survivors’ monologues are presented verbatim in the book, with slight editorial changes, and only now and then are they interrupted by comments from the author, who mostly expresses her sympathy with their pain or tries to illuminate things with comments that seem to come from psychotherapy. Of all the interviewees, it is clear that Yisraeli’s state is especially difficult. Throughout the interview, she weeps, and it seems that the bitterness, the anger and the disappoint-

ISRAEL MUSEUM ASKED TO RETURN HOLOCAUST VICTIMS’ PROPERTY

The parliamentary investigatory committee for the location and return of property of persons killed during the Holocaust has asked the Israel Museum to hand over hundreds of artworks and Judaica, claiming they belong to Holocaust victims whose property was seized by the Germans during WWII.

In a letter dispatched by the company’s Attorney General, Nadav Haetzni, he maintained that the Israel Museum is in possession of numerous works of art seized from Holocaust victims.

Haetzni cautioned the museum that according to law, all property of Holocaust victims must be transferred to the committee so that it can be returned to its rightful owners.

In the event that owners cannot be located, the committee will transfer the property or its value to needy Holocaust survivors, or institutions that perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust.

In response, the museums’ spokeswoman, Rachel Schechter, said that the museum has not received a letter on the matter. “When it arrives we shall respond willingly,” she said and added: “The Israel Museum regards the protection of these treasures as a national mission for the sake of the people of Israel and the world.”

ment with the adults who were supposed to protect her in her childhood are as present today as they were then.

“We were in the ghetto,” she relates, “and afterward we weren’t together, and I don’t know how it happened that my father and mother were not together. Where was my father when they took my mother to Treblinka?” Yisraeli was 5 years old at the time and her brother, Michael, was 10, and their father had given them money and the addresses of Polish friends and sent them on their way. He told her brother: “You are now responsible for your sister.” For months the two tried to reach one of the Polish families, chasing trains and hiding.

Finally, Yisraeli relates, “My brother didn’t have strength for me. I was injured, full of fleas, hungry and without clothes ... It was difficult for him. From a distance he saw some lake and wanted to drown me ... Luckily for me it was winter and the lake was all frozen. Later on, she is angry: “My father was in hiding ... He had a place to eat, to sleep, and they threw us, two little children, into this terrible world.”

There are things that Yisraeli doesn’t remember, but she knows that in the end they succeeded in reaching the Polish Matuszewski family – she was hidden in a town and her brother was sent to the countryside. From the distance of years, despite the terrible things she experienced during the war, Yisraeli has much more difficulty with what happened afterward. She knows that her father survived in hiding and was on his way to his children, but something went wrong – no one knows what – and he never came. At first she was sent to some childless relatives, cut off from her brother, who was sent to Germany, who remains alienated and distant from her to this day. Later, the relatives decided to move to Mexico, and sent her back to the Polish family. “One loss after another,” she says. But her father’s brother heard about this and decided to remove her from the Polish

(Continued on page 13)

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM




With a lot of hard work and effort put forth by the Event marked its 10th Anniversary with a very successful evening over 600 people in attendance, the American Society for Yad Va hundreds of new young people in their 20's and 30's who are comm special evening. The evening was highlighted by a raffle, whi American Society and the Young Leadership Associates, and wh



YOUNG LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATES TENTH ANNIVERSARY



Chairman, the Young Leadership Associates
ent at the West Side Loft in Manhattan. With
shem Young Leadership Associates drew out
mitted to Holocaust Remembrance to this very
ch helped to raise additional funds for the
ich will help further Education and Outreach.



Photo by Melanie Einzig



REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

SIXTY-FIVE YEARS LATER JUST TEN PERCENT OF BABI YAR VICTIMS IDENTIFIED

BY AMIRAM BARKAT

Sixty-five years after 33,000 Jews were massacred in the Babi Yar ravine in Ukraine, the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum in Jerusalem and several Jewish organizations are teaming up to identify the approximately 1 million Jews killed in the former Soviet Union during World War II.

As researchers interview the last surviving witnesses and examine old documents, the question they hear repeated over and over again is: "Where have you been until now?"

It was at Babi Yar, near the Ukrainian capital of Kiev, where German and Ukrainian soldiers and policemen carried out the mass murder. Sixty-five years later more than 90 percent of the Jews killed there have yet to be identified.

Yad Vashem has recorded the names of some 3,000 Jews killed at Babi Yar. While it also has the names of some 7,000 Jews from Kiev who were killed in the Holocaust, the museum's researchers don't know where they died or were buried.

The incomplete records stem from the fact that at the time of the massacre, only the number of dead was reported, and not their identifying details. Other *Einsatzgruppen* squads – mobile killing units that murdered about 1 million Jews between 1941 and 1943 in the western Soviet Union, northern Romania and eastern Poland – operated in a similar way. The project to identify Soviet victims, which began on Holocaust Remembrance Day, in April, has so far collected several thousand "pages of testimony" filled out by the relatives and acquaintances of those killed in the Holocaust and a few dozen lists of victims' names and memory books written by survivors of various cities and towns.

The project was initiated by Yossi Hollander, an Israeli entrepreneur in the hi-tech sector who lives in the United States. Yad Vashem is working with Jewish organizations that operate in the former Soviet Union and Jewish communities in the area.

Avner Shalev, chairman of the Yad Vashem directorate, said the museum had the names of more than 90 percent of Jewish victims killed in western and central Europe, 35 percent to 40 percent of those killed in Romania, Hungary and Poland – and only about 20 percent of those killed in the former Soviet Union. Some 600,000 Jews were killed during the Holocaust in Ukraine alone, and some 300,000 in Belarus, according to Yad Vashem.

Researchers have gleaned the names of the victims from records kept by the Germans, as well as pages of testimony and record books. Yad Vashem has collected about 3.5 million pages of testimony so far, of which only a few hundred thousand relate to people from the former Soviet Union.

First published in the *Haaretz*

SON OF SAVIORS OF A JEWISH GIRL ACCEPTS HOLOCAUST AWARD

BY KORIE WILKINS

Wally Czubytyj always heard the story of how his parents saved the life of a young Jewish girl during World War II. But the heroic efforts of his parents, Danyla and Rostyslaw, became all the more real when he accepted an award from the Israeli Consul General on their behalf. His parents are credited with risking their lives to save Hela Rapaport during the Nazi occupation of Ukraine in the 1940s.

"My mother would have loved to see this day," said Czubytyj. She died last February. His father is also deceased. A Jewish friend asked Czubytyj's parents in 1942, seeking help sheltering the teenage girl. Czubytyj said his mother

could not refuse.

The Rapaport family had been expelled from their home in the city of Radechov in the Ukraine.

"My parents, to me, always seemed very meek and mild," said Czubytyj. "I wouldn't have thought my parents would do something like this. But they did. My mother said she did it because it was the right thing to do. They had to do it."

The Israeli consul, Baruch Binah, said the Czubytyj family took a great risk in harboring Rapaport, who was later reunited with her sister and moved to Israel after the war. They could have been killed if the girl's true identity was discovered. "We remember those who have committed the crimes," he said. "But we also remember those few who rose to the

highest human level of courage and benevolence like your parents did."

Czubytyj was given a certificate and a medal, as his parents were given the title of "Righteous Among the Nations," the highest award given to non-Jews by the Israeli government and the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial. Rabbi Charles Rosenzweig, founder of the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills, said the Czubytyjs become the sixth people in Michigan given the honor.

In 1944, the Czubytyj family left Ukraine to escape Communism, settling in Michigan in 1950.

"This is such a huge honor," he said. "It means so much to my family."

First published in *Free Press*

HUNGARIAN WOMAN HONORED FOR HOLOCAUST HEROISM

Oskar Schindler had his list. Clara Ambrus-Baer and her family had their home in Budapest, and a nearby vacant textile factory.

The Baers, like the German industrialist, provided a safe haven for Jews during the Holocaust – saving some 50 people targeted by the Germans, including the future chief rabbi of Vienna. The Israeli government honored Clara Ambrus-Baer for her life-saving efforts more than six decades ago.

"I never expected this," said Ambrus-Baer, now 81 and living in Buffalo. "I didn't want to get praised for what I did. I took it for normal that somebody saves people's lives."

Ambrus-Baer received a "Righteous Among the Nations" award, presented to people who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. It is the highest honor bestowed on non-Jews by the state of Israel, with 21,310 recipients as

of January 2006.

Ambrus-Baer was 19 when the Germans invaded Budapest in 1944. Her family turned its home into a safe haven for Jews hiding from the Nazis, and also provided elaborate hideouts in a vacant textile factory that her parents once managed.

She recalled the times when the Germans came and banged on the front door of her home, when the discovery of the hidden Jews would have led to the death of her own family.

"We had a couple of dogs," Ambrus-Baer said. "And whenever anybody came to the door, then I always told them the dogs were very vicious - which was not true – and I had to put them away. It gave everybody some time to hide."

Ayre Mekel, Israeli consul general in New York, said the heroism of Ambrus-Baer and her family was verified by the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in

Jerusalem.

"The Jewish state has a long memory," said Mekel. "We remember our enemies. We don't easily forgive. But we remember our friends, too, particularly those who saved Jews during the Holocaust."

Julian Ambrus, Clara's husband of 60 years, said his wife also bribed German guards to free imprisoned Jews and provided the ex-prisoners with a hideaway. "She saved several hundred," he said.

After the war, Clara and Julius moved to Switzerland – where they became friendly with Oskar Schindler's brother. Schindler was renowned for saving more than 1,000 Jews by insisting their work was essential to keeping his factory in Poland open.

"We became very close friends," Julius Ambrus said. "We had dinner every week."

SURVIVORS SEEK MORE HOLOCAUST FUNDS

BY MATTHEW WAGNER

Yad Vashem, the Jewish Agency, and Holocaust survivor groups joined forces with Pensioner Affairs Minister Rafi Eitan to demand more money from the Conference of Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.

They also demanded that Israel be given equal representation in the running of the Claims Conference.

"If money continues to be allocated the way it has been, it will still be sitting in the bank when the last of the Holocaust survivors is gone," Jewish Agency Chairman Zeev Bielski told a press conference in Jerusalem. "Israel is the center of the Jewish world," he said. "Therefore, we need a change in the way the Claims Conference functions."

Eitan said he had visited Holocaust survivors in Israel and found that they were suffering due, in part, to problems with the way the Claims Conference allocated funds.

"Holocaust survivors are at the end of their lives," he said. "In another 15 years,

only a very few survivors will remain. We should give them the money they deserve now, while they are still alive, and not wait until it is too late."

A memorandum demanding that 60 percent of the funds be spent in Israel was signed by Eitan; Bielski; the chairman of



A young couple at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem.

the Center of Organizations of Holocaust Survivors, Noah Flug; the chairman of Yad Vashem, Avner Shalev; and the chairman of the Fund for the Welfare of Holocaust Survivors in Israel, Zeev Factor.

"In light of the centrality of the State of Israel... 60% of the funds... will be allocated in Israel and the remainder will be distributed in the rest of the countries of the

world," it read.

They also said that 80% of the funds should be earmarked for aid to needy Holocaust survivors, while 20% be used for memorializing the Holocaust, education, research and documentation, as well as strengthening Jewish heritage.

The conference allocates approximately \$90 million a year for Holocaust survivors' needs, and its total assets are estimated at \$1.7 billion. It raises funds from the sale of unclaimed Jewish property in former East Germany. The most valuable of those properties have already been claimed.

In a letter to Claims Conference President Israel Singer and Chairman Julius Berman, Eitan wrote, "Israeli representation in the Claims Conference and its various committees should be substantially expanded to reflect the central role of the State of Israel within the Jewish people, and the number of Jews and Holocaust survivors who were absorbed in Israel and live in Israel today," the Jewish Agency said in its statement.

First published in *The Jerusalem Post*

HOW MUCH LONGER CAN HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS WAIT?

A new study reveals that Holocaust survivors are still owed as much as \$175 billion in restitution payments, six decades after the Shoah. Meanwhile, efforts to open up a key German Holocaust archive have stalled.

While no amount of money can ever make up for the wholesale slaughter of European Jews during World War II, restitution payments from Germany and other countries go some way toward redressing the balance. However, a new study reveals that as much as \$175 billion is still owed to survivors of the Shoah.

The study, prepared by international economist Sidney Zabudoff for the Jerusalem-based *Jewish Political Studies Review*, reveals that hundreds of billions of dollars have still not been paid out.

Restitution efforts have intensified in the years since the end of the Cold War, said Zabudoff, a former White House, Treasury Department and CIA official. He added that increased public pressure, motivated by new reports about the scope of Nazi looting and attempts to conceal accounts by Swiss banks, has played a role in facilitating payments.

European countries have pledged \$3.4 billion in restitution payments. However only around half of that sum had been paid by 2005, the study showed.

During the entire post-war period, only about 20 percent of the assets looted from Europe's Jews was returned, Zabudoff said. The Nazis forced many Jews to sell their possessions and property, often at

"far less than prevailing market values," he said, adding that the Soviets had also confiscated "large amounts of stocks and bonds" belonging to Jews from the *Reichsbank* in Berlin at the end of the war.

The new study has reopened the at-times virulent debate over how best to help elderly Holocaust survivors in Europe, the US and Israel, many of whom are very poor.

"Things are moving much too slowly," Menachem Rosensaft of the International

Network of Children of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, told Reuters.

There have been a number of high-profile restitution cases in Germany in recent months, as valuable paintings and property have been returned to Jewish victims of the Holocaust and their families.

Meanwhile, the Associated Press reported that the archive of the International Tracing Service, a unique archive containing vast amounts of documents related to the Holocaust, still remains off-limits to researchers, with officials saying it could take years before its valuable contents become available for study — exasperating researchers and Holocaust survivors.



Polish survivors mourn fellow prisoners who were killed in Buchenwald.

The 11 countries administering the vast archive agreed last year to open it up for research, delighting researchers who hoped to finally gain access to the documents. The group had argued for nearly a

decade over objections that opening the archive would violate the privacy of some victims, with the German government long resisting pressure from the other countries to allow access.

According to the Associated Press, which was granted access to part of the

archive, the invaluable contents include a carbon copy of an original list of Jews saved by German industrialist Oskar Schindler, eye-witness accounts of the genocide at Auschwitz by liberated inmates, and hundreds of pages of personal "behavior" reports written by members of the SS about concentration camp inmates. The archive is administered by the International Tracing Service (ITS), an arm of the International Committee of the Red Cross, located in the German town of Bad Arolsen.

German Justice Minister Brigitte Zypries announced last April that Germany had changed its mind and would work with the US to make the archives public. She told reporters in Washington that agreement

among member states should take no more than six months. That was eight months ago, however.

The agreement was just the first step in a long legal process to revise the 1955 treaty which governs the archive. However, only Israel and the US have so far fully endorsed the amendments adopted last May by the 11 countries involved.

The other members say they are working on the necessary legislation. "We are moving very fast," Liesbeth Lijnzaad of the Foreign Ministry in the Netherlands, which now holds the committee chairmanship, told Associated Press. "If a treaty enters into force within three years of signature, that is a huge achievement. It rarely happens."

Academics and groups representing elderly survivors are frustrated by the slow pace of progress, arguing that urgent access to the material is needed to help combat Holocaust deniers, and that the long-winded legislative process needs to be speeded up.

"The survivors want open access to the material. That gives the greatest protection to them and their legacy," Paul Shapiro of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, who has lobbied for years for the archive to be opened, told the Associated Press.

"They are disappearing before our eyes. How much longer does the world expect them to wait?" he said.

First published in Spiegel Online

"SECONDARY HOLOCAUST EFFECT" BREAKS LINK TO AGE-OLD JEWISH LANGUAGE

BY MICHAEL TARM, AP

For Barney Sidler and his fellow inmates at the Buchenwald concentration camp, misery and death were everyday features of life.

So was Yiddish, the language of prewar European Jews that scholars say was another, if lesser known, victim of the Holocaust.

Nearly all Buchenwald's prisoners spoke the Germanic language, which dates back to the 11th century displacement of Jews in Europe, said Sidler, who recalls the words of encouragement inmates would whisper in Yiddish amid the horror.

"People would say to each other, 'Zorg zikh nihst. Got vet undz helf' — which means, 'Don't worry. Got will help us,'" said Sidler, 73.

Most of the 6 million Jews killed by the Nazis hailed from the Yiddish-speaking heart of Eastern Europe, where Nazis also pillaged and burned the close-knit Jewish *shtetls*, or villages — similar to ones portrayed in the musical "Fiddler on the Roof."

"Yiddish speakers fared especially poorly because their language was, to the Nazi ear, a debased, corrupted version of the language of the (German) Fatherland," wrote Miriam Weinstein in her recent book "Yiddish: A Nation of Words."

"Because almost no one but Jews spoke the language, Yiddish became an easy marker for enemies looking to root them out," she wrote.

The Nazis gutted prewar Yiddish culture and hence decimated the main wellspring of Jewish culture for centuries, according to leading Yiddish scholar Dovid Katz.

"The idea that Hitler failed to annihilate much of the European Jewish civilization is soothing self-deception," said Katz, head of the Vilnius Yiddish Institute in Lithuania, a prewar hub of Yiddish arts

and learning.

That Yiddish civilization evolved over a millennium, as Jews sought to escape persecution by first settling in German areas in central Europe, then by moving eastward to Poland, Lithuania and other regions nearby in the 14th century.

Yiddish began as a fusion of medieval German with Hebrew and Aramaic — languages Jews spoke before dispersing from areas in and around what is now Israel. As they moved into Eastern Europe, Yiddish also picked up Polish and Russian words.

Early detractors, who sometimes included Jews themselves, would deride Yiddish as a hodgepodge dialect with little merit as a language in its own right.

But by 1900, Yiddish was widely favored by Jewish writers. Ultimate acknowledgment of its merits came in 1978, when Yiddish-language writer Isaac Bashevis Singer won the Nobel prize for literature.

In his acceptance speech, Singer sounded a hopeful note.

"Yiddish has not yet said its last word," he said. "It contains treasures that have not been revealed to the eyes of the world."

But as elderly Holocaust survivors die, an irreplaceable link to Yiddish language and culture is being broken, Yiddish enthusiasts say.

The number of non-orthodox Yiddish speakers, most of whom are Holocaust survivors, has fallen below 500,000 worldwide and will "soon collapse altogether," Katz said. "It is a devastating time ... For us, it is the secondary Holocaust effect."

Sidler, who was just 12 when U.S. troops liberated the camp in 1945, strikes a pessimistic chord about the chances of Yiddish surviving as he knew it.

"I still speak Yiddish to my sisters and cousins," said Sidler, who moved to the Chicago area after the war. "But in another few years, it'll be nonexistent, I fear."

INFLUENCE OF KLAUS BARBIE EXPLORED AT YAD VASHEM

A new display of sketches drawn by the French artist Rene Diaz at the trial of war criminal Klaus Barbie have been put on display at the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum in Jerusalem.

The opening of the exhibition coincided with a symposium held at Yad Vashem the influence of the Klaus Barbie trial on Holocaust remembrance in France, with the participation of the artist, Nazi hunter Serge Klarsfeld, who was responsible for Barbie's eventual capture in 1983, French Cultural Counsellor in Israel Prof. Tobie T. Nathan, and the Chairman of the French Society for Yad Vashem Richard Prasquier.

Klaus Barbie was born in 1913 in Bad Godesberg, Germany. He joined the Nazi party in 1932 and the SS and SD three years later.

When the Germans invaded southern France in 1942, Barbie was appointed head of the Gestapo in Lyon, where he commanded operations involving the arrest, torture, murder and deportation of thousands of Jews and underground fighters. Barbie's inconceivable cruelty earned him the infamous title, "the Butcher of Lyon."

After the war, Barbie worked as an agent for American counter-intelligence in Germany. In 1951, he immigrated to Bolivia and settled in the capital, La Paz, adopting a false name, Klaus Altman.

In 1952 and 1954, Barbie was tried in absentia in France, and found guilty both times. In 1971, Nazi hunters Beate and Serge Klarsfeld tracked him down.

Unfortunately, requests for extradition were denied several times. Only in 1983 was Barbie successfully deported from Bolivia to France.

He was charged with crimes against humanity, crimes for which the statute of limitations does not apply. They included responsibility for: the February 1943 raid on the General Union of French Jewry, during which 85 Jews were arrested and transported to Auschwitz; the deportation of 44 Jewish children hiding in the village of Izieu, near Lyon; and the last transport of Jews from Lyon to Auschwitz in 1944. Barbie was also accused of deporting 842 members of the French underground (the *Resistance*) — half of whom were Jewish — from Lyon, as well as for the torture and the murder of Jean Moulin, a prominent member of the Resistance.

On 4 July 1987, Klaus Barbie was found guilty of crimes against humanity, and sentenced to life in prison, the maximum penalty permitted under French law. In 1991, Barbie died of cancer, in prison.

The sketches on display are part of a larger collection belonging to the Rene Diaz, which he drew for over eight weeks at Barbie's trial in 1987, and then touched up in 1993.



Sylvia Zimmerman and Serge Klarsfeld.



The defendant, Klaus Barbie, arrives at the defendant's bench.

Report from the American Society for **YAD VASHEM**

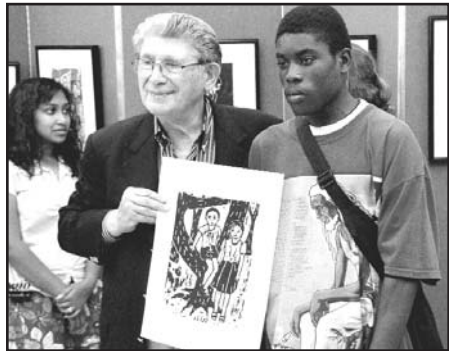
HOLOCAUST PROJECT IMPROVES STUDENT TEST SCORES

When the Florida Chapter of the American Society for Yad Vashem developed a Holocaust curriculum around the Yad Vashem Names Database, our primary interest was to involve the students more closely with the reality of that event. The multicultural students at Lake Worth High School, in Lake Worth, Florida became actively involved in the fate of the victims by working with the yizkorbuch (memorial book) of Luboml, Poland, a DVD of interviews with former residents of Luboml, and the Yad Vashem record of the victims.

Using the Yad Vashem Names Database on the Internet, the remedial reading classes created bracelets for each family, with a bead for every victim in the family — by name.

Art classes created woodcuts, from images in the Luboml book or original designs.

The French class wrote poems about the victims of Luboml.



Aaron Ziegelman, who was born in Luboml, holds a woodcut by student Adlert Nozifort showing Ziegelman and his sister as children.

Social Science students traced the history and genealogy of victims, and created posters.

In shop class, the students reproduced a memorial to Luboml in Jerusalem, in perfect Hebrew and simulated stone.

The cooking class made challah and

“I WAS ASHAMED TO BE GERMAN”

Mrs. Liselotte Hassenstein received the title of: *“Righteous Among the Nations”* from Yad Vashem.

The late Mrs. Hassenstein and her husband, Otto, who was responsible for 16 forestries in Brody, Poland, helped the Jews who worked under his supervision.

When the harassment of Jews became worse in 1942, Mrs. Hassenstein started to hide Jews in their house. Word got around and more Jews came around and Liselotte didn't turn anybody away. She hid mothers and children in their large attic and brought them food.

“I was ashamed to be German,” she wrote in her memoirs, “I could not send them away because it would have been sending them to death.”

Liselotte Hassenstein herself was sentenced to death by the Germans, and only the arrival of the Russians in 1945 saved her. Her husband, Otto, was fired from his government position as punishment.

Liselotte Hassenstein passed away 2 years ago at the age of 99.

Yad Vashem's medal and certificate of

kugel.

From their statements about their work, it was clear that the students learned a great deal about tolerance, and the dangers of prejudice. Now, we find



Rochel Berman, a director of the Florida Chapter, guides Lake Worth High School students in creating a list of events in the destruction of the Luboml Jewish community.

that the curriculum had still another major impact.

The statewide school evaluation in Florida, known as FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) is the most important factor in the educational program. Teachers and principals are evaluated on how well students progress on these tests. Lake Worth High School, where our curriculum was developed, is consistently among the lowest-scoring in the state. Throughout the development of the curriculum, the teachers with whom we worked stressed “FCAT strategies,” formal techniques for students to examine, evaluate and internalize new material.

Following the introduction of the American Society curriculum, the 71 students in the remedial reading classes that used our material averaged a jump of 115 points, and one student score improved from 886 a year ago to 1526 — 640 points! Sparked by this extraordinary performance, the entire school's rating improved from D to C. The Principal has attributed this victory to the Holocaust studies, which so engaged the students.

the *“Righteous Among the Nations”* was presented to her grandchildren, Susanne and Christian Hassenstein, in a ceremony at the Israeli Consulate in New York.

The award was presented by Israel's Consul General in New York, Ambassador Arye Mekel and the Development Director



Left to Right: Ambassador Arye Mekel, Susanne Hassenstein, Ambassador Hans-Jurgen Heimsoeth, Christian Hassenstein and Shraga Isaac Mekel.

of the American Society for Yad Vashem, Shraga Isaac Mekel, in the presence of the Consul General of the Republic of Germany, Ambassador Hans-Jurgen Heimsoeth.

“THE AUSCHWITZ ALBUM” IS ATTRACTING LARGE CROWDS IN THE UNITED STATES

Yad Vashem's exhibition *“The Auschwitz Album,”* is attracting large crowds in the United States.

The exhibition is based on the album, which was found by the late Lili Jacob in 1945, and turned out to be photos that were taken of her own transport to Auschwitz in May of 1944.

The album, believed to be the only visual evidence of the horrors that took place inside the notorious death camp was donated by Lili Jacob to Yad Vashem.

The exhibition was created in order to be displayed at the United Nations headquarters in New York in January 2005, marking 60 years since the liberation of Auschwitz.

The American Society for Yad Vashem sponsored the exhibition, which was shown from January until October 2006 at the Field Museum in Chicago, and close to 240,000 people viewed the exhibition! Mr. Lester Crown, who brought the exhibition to The Field Museum, expressed great satisfaction about the interest the

exhibition created in Chicago.

The next stop for the exhibition was the University of Miami – The Sue and Leonard



Jews undergoing the selection process on the Birkenau arrival platform known as the “ramp”. The people in the background are on their way to Crematorium

Miller Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies. 200 people participated at the opening reception of the exhibition on November 9th, sponsored by Mr. Norman Braman, and thousands of people viewed the exhibition at the University.

Speakers at the reception included Mr. Norman Braman, Mr. Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem, Professor Haim Shaked, head of the Center for Contemporary Judaic Studies, and Dr. Michael Birnbaum, who gave a lecture on the significance of Auschwitz in the Holocaust.

The great interest in the exhibition encourages the American Society for Yad Vashem to continue and send it to be displayed all over the United States.



THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM AND THE ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SOCIAL STUDIES



OF THE UNITED FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (ATSS/UFT)

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DATE: Sunday, March 11th, 2007

**TIME: 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM
8:30 AM - Breakfast
9:00 AM Program Commences**

**PLACE: Marymount School/Pratt Mansion
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info@yadvashemusa.org**

MAJOR CREDIT FOR THE RESCUE OF ITALY'S JEWS GOES TO CATHOLIC CLERGY, YAD VASHEM SAYS

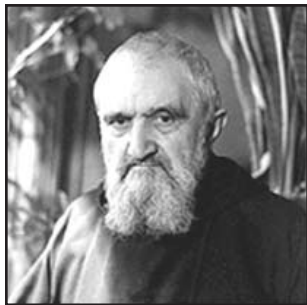
Although the Vatican was justifiably criticized for its deafening silence during the Nazi deportation of Jews, a loud chorus of refugee assistance resonated in its monasteries, convents and churches. A large number of priests, monks and nuns sheltered and fed desperate Jewish men, women and children, a chapter in the Holocaust that too many historians have overlooked or minimized.

In Italy, the clergy played a major role in rescue activity, according to Mordecai Paldiel, research chief of Israel's Yad Vashem, which uses stringent standards to honor Holocaust heroes. Paldiel, who himself was hidden as a child by Father Simon Gallay of France, says that much of the credit for the rescue of most of Italy's 45,000 Jews is due to the clergy. "There can be little doubt that the rescue of 85 percent of Italy's Jews," he says, "can be safely attributed to the massive support extended to fleeing Jews by the overwhelming majority of the Catholic clergy (without in most cases even waiting for clearance by their superiors) as well as of persons from all walks of life, even of officials and militiamen within the more intensely Fascist Salo regime." Despite the Vatican's official aloofness from the Holocaust question, many were surprised to learn after the war that 450 Jews were hidden in its vast enclaves during the Nazi occupation. And hundreds of priests and bishops throughout the Italian peninsula put their lives in jeopardy to shelter, feed and clothe the countless refugees.

One of the earliest organized rescue efforts unfolded in Assisi, the birthplace of St. Francis, the founder of the Franciscan

order. Shortly after the Nazis occupied Italy, Padre Ruffino Niccacci of the *Damiano* monastery received an unusual assignment from his bishop: Find homes and hiding places for more than 300 Jews who just arrived from Trieste.

Padre Niccacci, a peasant turned priest, managed to have many of the refugees sheltered in buildings on the monastery grounds and dressed them as monks and nuns to hide their true identities during frequent Nazi searches. Others were placed in parishioners' homes and blended into the community. He also provided them with false credentials to speed their journey to other monasteries and convents, where it been reported the nuns prepared kosher meals for their Jewish guests. Not a single refugee was captured while staying at Assisi.



Father Marie Benoit

Maria Benedetto (known as Father Marie Benoit when he was in Marseilles) transformed his monastery in Rome into a way station and rescue center to aid hundreds of Jewish and anti-Nazi refugees. When *Delasem* (*Delegazione Assistenza Emigranti Ebrei*), the highly-efficient Jewish service agency, had to go underground during the Nazi occupation, it carried out operations from Father Benedetto's monastery. Here, *Delasem* stored its archives, held meetings, processed refugees and provided hiding places. In just 12 months, the number of refugees receiving shelter and meals at the monastery swelled from a

few hundred to over 4,000.

High-level Catholic officials, as well as ordinary clerics, extended a helping hand. Monsignor Quadraroli, a secretary at the Vatican, issued countless false IDs to refugees and sent them to the convent on Via Cicerone to be fed and sheltered. And in northern Italy, Abraham Cohen, on the run from the Nazis, recalled the assistance he received from unknown clerics: "The Catholic Church helped me a lot. They found a place for me to stay and a priest went with me from Ivrea to Azeglio on a bicycle. . . There, we found another priest, who arranged a place for me to hide."

Susan Zuccotti, Holocaust historian, gives a very balanced view in assessing the overall picture: "When the Germans finally retreated from Rome after nine months of occupation, at least 1,700 Jews arrested in Rome had been deported. Over 10,000 had survived. Every survivor owed his life to one, and usually to several, heroic non-Jewish supporters. But except for those caught in that first, unexpected roundup in October, most deportees could also trace their tragedy to non-Jews who had, in the last analysis, failed to provide support."

However, there's no denying that the network of Catholic institutions played a significant role in providing asylum for Jewish refugees.

"In no other occupied Catholic country," says Paldiel of Yad Vashem, "were monasteries, convents, shrines, and religious houses opened to the fleeing Jews, and their needs attended to, without any overt intention to steer them away from their ancient faith, solely to abide by the preeminent religious command of the sanctity of life. Through this, they epitomized the best and most elevated form of religious faith and human fidelity."

YAD VASHEM TO COLLECT NAMES FROM THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

Yad Vashem and the Immigrant Absorption Ministry have embarked on a project to record the names of Soviet-era Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

Their emissaries will spend a month attempting to visit the roughly one million Russian immigrants in Israel to create a database of names, the ministry said.

The "Immortalization Month" campaign aims to gather as many names as possible of the hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews who perished. Yad Vashem has 3.1 million names of Jewish Holocaust victims in its database, of which only 350,000 names belong to Soviet Jews.

According to the ministry, only 20 percent of the victims from Soviet areas have been recorded, as opposed to about 80% from Western European countries, and about 40% from nations like Hungary, Poland and Romania.

For example, Yad Vashem has the names of only 7,000 Jews murdered at Babi Yar in the Ukraine, although it is known that some 33,000 Jews were murdered there.

The project will be conducted during February all over the country, especially in areas with large concentrations of immigrants from the former Soviet Union. They will be presented with a "Witness Document" questionnaire.

Officials from the ministry will focus on its branch offices, immigrant centers, clubs, housing projects, libraries, local authorities, as well as working through immigrant organizations.

The questionnaires, which will collect biographical information about victims from the general public, survivors and the families of victims, will be collated and kept in the hall of names at Yad Vashem.



Church of San Damiano

THEIR PRIVATE HOLOCAUST

(Continued from page 7)

family. Again. Yisraeli has not forgiven him to this day.

She remembers that she was injected with an anesthetic and woke up in a hotel room. Despite the terrible uprooting, her uncle did not think of taking her under his wing. He just wanted her not to be with Christians, and took her to an orphanage, still in Poland. From there she came to Israel, to the Mikveh Yisrael boarding school. Later, when everyone went into the army, she had to go to live with her uncle's new family, where she experienced humiliations and difficulties from which she is not free to this day. "I don't understand how I survived here, in this country, after the war," she tells Ezer-Ulitzky. "I didn't have a home, I didn't have a corner of my own, I slept in one place and another. Virginia Woolf wrote 'A Room of One's Own.' A corner of my own would have sufficed for me."

SECOND CLASS

The well-known insensitivity that Holocaust survivors encountered on their arrival in Israel seems especially harsh and infuriating when it happens to children, who were trundled here without parents, without a close, familiar adult at their sides, and were passed from hand to hand — sometimes from relatives who gave them up after a short while to institutions and kibbutzim, which not only acted insensitively but also related to them as "second class," according to some of the

interviewees.

Ruti Ben David, who was born in 1936 in Tel Aviv, returned with her family to Lithuania because of economic difficulties, and was trapped there when the war broke out. She herself survived, thanks to a Lithuanian family, but she lost her parents. When she came to Israel, after a short period at the home of relatives "who didn't imagine what they were getting," she was transferred to the *Ahava* institution. At the end of three years there, when she was in eighth grade, she was sent to a youth group at *Kibbutz Netzer Sereni*. "If I broke down," she tells Ezer-Ulitzky, "it happened there...the feeling of being second class was manifested in our clothing that we got from *Youth Aliyah*, in the possibility of participating in dance, instrumental and sports classes...The *sabras* learned subjects that we, the *Youth Aliyah* children, were weak at, and therefore they sent us to work in the plant nursery while they were studying, and thus the gap between us grew."

There are survivors who are obviously forgiving and have come to terms with the life that was given them. But for many of them, there is still mainly pain, almost as vivid today as it was then, "for mother and father, for the lost childhood, for the pain of separation from adoptive parents, and altogether for a life that could have been built in one way and was built in an entirely different direction," as Ezer-Ulitzky says.

First published in *Haaretz*

OTTO FRANK'S LETTERS DISCOVERED

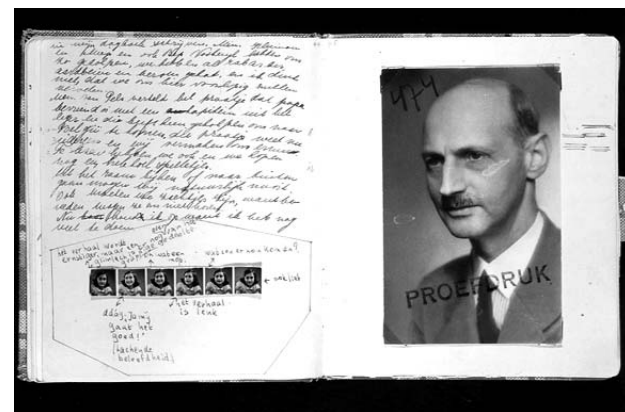
Two summers ago, Estelle Guzik, a volunteer archivist at New York City's YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, came across a curious file previously not indexed: a cache of letters written by Anne Frank's father, Otto. The roughly 80 documents, including considerable correspondence from Otto Frank to friends, family and officials, reveal just how desperately Mr. Frank — who survived the Holocaust — was trying to save his wife, Edith, his mother-in-law, Rosa Hollander, and his daughters, Margot and Anne.

The until now undisclosed trove of documents include letters Otto Frank wrote between April 30, 1941 and December 11, 1941 (when Germany declared war on the U.S.), as well as correspondence from his U.S. relatives and a university friend, New York's Nathan Straus Jr., the son of the Macy's department store's founder. The Franks began their two years in hiding in an attic above Otto Frank's office in July 1942.

The Otto Frank file measures at least half an inch thick, and page-by-page tells how the Franks tried desperately to escape from Nazi-occupied Holland. By the time Otto wrote his letters, the U.S. consulate in the Netherlands had closed,

so he explored possible escape routes through Spain that would ultimately lead to exit via neutral Portugal. He also sought visas to Paris and made attempts to arrange passage for his family to the United States or Cuba.

Perhaps the most interesting question raised by the letters' release is why Otto Frank's letters and pleas were



A page from the diary of Anne Frank, circa 1944, showing a photo of her father, Otto Frank, who survived three years of hiding in Amsterdam and his deportation to Auschwitz.

not answered. YIVO executive director Carl Rheins believes the Frank file raises profound questions about U.S. immigration policy. Meanwhile, YIVO has enlisted "giants" of Holocaust studies to put the letters in context: American University professor Richard Breitman and David Engel, New York University's Maurice Greenberg Professor of Holocaust studies.

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS REUNITE SIXTY YEARS LATER

A woman who was one of just a few thousand Lithuanian Jews to have survived the Holocaust was reunited for the first time after 61 years with a member of a Catholic family who helped keep her alive.

Lea Ingel and Giedrute Ramanauskiene embraced and held each other during their emotional reunion at Kennedy Airport yesterday.

They cried, acknowledging it might be the last time they would see each other, given their faltering health.

Ingel, now 84, said earlier she had no idea what she would say to



Lea, left, and Giedrute.

Ramanauskiene, 77, whom she hasn't seen since she was sheltered at Ramanauskiene's family farm for a year.

"I'm not so good with the talking - with the language - because I haven't been there for so long," she said, referring to Lithuania, where she left in 1945. She has never returned.

Ingel traveled from Tamarac, Fla., to New York for the reunion, and Ramanauskiene came from the small town of Simnas, Lithuania. She still lives on the same farm where her family once sheltered Ingel.

Ramanauskiene's brother, Gintautas Ivanauskai, 73, was also supposed to make the trip, but was unable to travel with his sister due to visa trouble, although he may come later.

The reunion was made possible by the New York-based Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, which gives financial support to mostly Christians from Eastern Europe who helped rescue Jews from the Holocaust.

DETECTIVE WORK UNCOVERS NAZIS IN US

(Continued from page 5)

the office's creation in 1979. With an annual budget of \$5 million, and a staff of 30 that includes 12 attorneys and 10 historians, it has deported or stripped the U.S. citizenship of 103 individuals.

The office brought a record 10 new prosecutions in 2002, and has 17 cases in litigation. "We are swamped," Rosenbaum said.

"We found in the former Soviet Union and other communist countries a veritable treasure trove of evidence," he said in explaining the increase in cases.

Rosenbaum said his office is in a race against the clock to bring cases as soon as possible, with most of the suspects now in their 80s. "The grim reaper has been depriving us of suspects," he said.

The United States cannot prosecute the cases criminally, mainly because the events took place on foreign territory. But it can assist in the extradition of Nazi war criminals to stand trial abroad.

One of the office's most notorious cases involved John Demjanjuk, who was accused of being the sadistic Nazi death camp guard "Ivan the Terrible."

BY DANIEL SCHATZ

My childhood was full of magical, well-known tales, about characters like Tevye the Milkman, as well as tales of love and joy and everyday life in the shtetls of Poland, told with warmth and wit by my grandparents. There were Moyshe and Sorale and Feygele from the shtetl of Zamosc; people I never met, but who were brought to life through my grandparent's stories.

Some of them became my childhood heroes. As a little boy yet unaware of Auschwitz, I wondered about my grandmother's sadness: Even when telling funny stories, she seemed to laugh with one eye and cry with the other. I don't remember when I found out that all characters, so alive in these vivid stories, were murdered in Auschwitz.

In recent years I have had several opportunities to visit former Polish shtetls, including the town of Zamosc where my grandmother's family lived before the Holocaust. These villages are places where Jewish memory has been turned into history.

On a one-lane street leading to a small house on Ulica Gesia in Zamosc, I found the house where the Zalcman family once lived. It was from this house that my relatives, Moshe, Henale, and Avrum Zalcman, were deported to the death camp of Belzec, just a few dozen kilometers away, in July 1942.

There are no Jews in Zamosc today. No sign of a once-thriving Jewish life is present. The only memories left of Tevye the Milkman, Feter Moyshe and my own family's legacy are their properties, and the property of thousands of other Jews that was seized by the Nazis during World War II and nationalized by the Polish Communist government after the war.

It is estimated that there are currently over 170,000 private properties held in Poland that were wrongfully seized from Jewish victims of the Holocaust and communist terror. These properties have an estimated value of billions of dollars,

according to a comprehensive report recently drawn up by experts from the business sector, non-profit and non-governmental organizations at the request of the Israeli government.

60 years after the end of World War II and the liberation of the extermination camps, no viable solution has been found to resolve this critical issue.

Poland was one of the main victims of Nazi Germany, and six million of its citizens - half of them Jews - were murdered by the Germans. Since regaining its independence in 1989, joining NATO and entering the European Union, Poland has established itself as a model for free and



The Rotunda, used by the Nazis as a prison and execution ground, today houses a museum covering Zamosc's suffering during the Second World War.

democratic states in Eastern Europe and throughout the world.

Poland's reputation as a force for moral good would be made greater by reaching a just settlement, acceptable to all parties, on the issue of restitution of private property seized from Polish Jews.

The Polish Parliament could take an important step in this direction by passing comprehensive legislation providing for the complete restitution of assets stolen by the Nazis and the communist government. The advanced age of remaining Holocaust survivors makes the matter all the more urgent and the need to act all the more pressing.

The international standards are clear. The overriding principle that emerged in the immediate post-war period in Western Europe and was enacted in allied decrees and legislation that has continued to this day (see the recent German Property Law

1990) is that property that was taken from Jewish owners and heirs must be returned, with interest, to their former Jewish owners. A wrong was committed. The wrong must be remedied.

The European Convention of Human Rights (1953), which the Republic of Poland has ratified, states that "Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions" (Article 1). The convention makes it absolutely clear that "no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law."

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has also consistently advocated that its member states deal with restitution of property stolen by the Nazis in a comprehensive and non-discriminatory way. During its 10th Parliamentary Session in 2001, the OSCE adopted a resolution urging member states "to ensure that they have implemented appropriate legislation to secure the restitution and/or compensation for property loss by victims of Nazi persecution...to Nazi victims or their heir(s) irrespective of their current citizenship or place of residence."

The remaining ghosts of the past must be fought and old offences must be compensated. It is high time we honor the memory of those who were murdered during the Nazi tyranny, and bring justice to the survivors and their heirs by rectifying the wrongful expropriations of property by the Nazi and communist regimes.

By intensifying our efforts to return the confiscated properties to their rightful owners and by honoring the memory of the past, we safeguard the fundamental principles of tolerance, freedom and democracy - and help ensure that no child in the future will have to learn his childhood heroes were annihilated.

Daniel Schatz is a political scientist and Swedish Candidate for Parliament

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PEBBLES FROM THE "KINDERTRANSPORT"

(Continued from page 6)

20,000 ugly adults."

As for Walter Falk, who had kissed his mother goodbye and boarded a train out of Germany, thinking they would be reunited soon, the outbreak of war in September 1939 erased any chance that his mother would safely exit Germany. Even while German air raids in the Battle of Britain darkened the English sky, Falk managed to correspond with his mother, via a Swiss relative. Nelly Falk's letters were careful, guarded

One day, they stopped coming.

From out in the bare December garden, he chooses the smoothest stones, the ones with the rough edges worn away, by weather or by time. He washes them in the kitchen sink, then puts them in his pocket on the way to the cemetery.

In August, his wife Ginger died - like Walter Falk, she was a German Jew who managed to escape the war, fleeing to Argentina. They met in New York City, where he emigrated after the war to be with an aunt.

He never set foot in Germany again until 1950, by then a private in Uncle Sam's

Army, on a weekend pass. It was too soon to process it all, so he settled for being uppity with the Germans, he and a buddy parking their combat boots on the facing seats in the train compartment. *Verboten!* the conductor huffed. Hah? they jeered back, cupping their hands behind their ears. We don't understand German!

He was a salesman after the Army, had a good life with Ginger, but now he's alone, with his cat and his papers and his china coffee cups. He still gets visits from Ginger's home nurse, a Muslim woman who left behind her own tale of horrors in Africa's Sierra Leone - exiting via England, just like Walter Falk. On a December afternoon, Isha Conteh accompanies the old man to the Jewish cemetery near Four Seasons. He puts on his black skull cap, and holding the smooth, cold stones in his palm, he places one on top of his wife's headstone, one on his mother's.

This is the Hebrew way. For those who come later, the stones show that someone was here, and remembered.

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Yad Vashem –
The Holocaust
Martyrs' and Heroes'
Remembrance Authority
The International
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Holocaust Studies



The Conference
on Jewish
Material Claims
Against Germany

JEWISH EDUCATORS SEMINAR

'Learning to make a difference'

Teaching the Shoah,

Antisemitism and Contemporary Israel

SUMMER July 22, 2007 – August 9, 2007

WINTER December 21, 2007 – January 6, 2008

We are pleased to offer this seminar in English for Jewish educators working in Jewish day schools. This is a unique and prestigious program taking place at the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

How should we present Jewish life before, during and after the Holocaust? How do we implement Holocaust education in our schools and instill a positive Jewish identity in our students? What is our responsibility and how will we transmit Holocaust remembrance without survivors? How shall we commemorate Yom HaShoah in the future? These questions will be explored in-depth during our seminar.

SEMINAR CONTENT

60 years has elapsed since the almost total destruction of European Jewry. In light of new research, new materials have been produced to help us learn and teach about the everyday life of the Jewish people and the Jewish communities that were destroyed.

The seminar will feature academic lectures by leading scholars and educational experts from Yad Vashem and Israeli universities in order to provide the participants with historical knowledge in the field of the Holocaust. Special attention will be given to widening the participants' knowledge on pre-Holocaust Jewry and Jewish responses during Nazi occupation. The program will also discuss issues of contemporary antisemitism; uses of survivor testimony; interdisciplinary teaching approaches; age-appropriate methodology; and the impact of the Holocaust on the Jewish world and its effects on Western civilization.

Special workshops and discussion groups will enable participants to explore educational issues, pedagogical theories and practical applications in Jewish educational frameworks.

CRITERIA FOR APPLYING

- The seminar is open to Jewish educators working in Jewish day schools.
- There will be a maximum of 30 participants.

MORE INFORMATION

THERE IS NO COST FOR THE SEMINAR

Seminar tuition and hotel accommodations in a double room on a bed and breakfast basis will be paid for by Yad Vashem. The seminar is largely sponsored by Yad Vashem, The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and the Asper International Holocaust Studies Program.

For more information please contact:

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A SHOAH SURVIVOR WRITES ABOUT HIS MIRACLES

(Continued from page 6)

and told me, 'God bless you, may you never die.'

He said the reaction of Argentina's Christians to his book is much stronger than the Jews because "the Jews already know this story."

Klainman said he was inspired to write "El Septimo Milagro" after his son Miguel began asking him troubling questions about his past.

"For 50 years I guarded my silence like a hermit, but then I got tired of these delinquents denying the Holocaust," he said. "I realized that by keeping silent, I was becoming an accomplice, collaborating with them."

It took Klainman four months to write the book. His original draft version ran 107 pages; only 25 copies of that version were printed.

"When I read what I had written, I real-

ized nobody would believe it was true," he said. "So we [Klainman and his wife, Teresa] decided to travel to Poland to look for details. It was very traumatic, that first time back in Poland, more so for Teresa than for me."

"Jorge didn't talk about it. I knew very little," said Teresa Klainman, an Argentina native who had no idea what a concentration camp was until she met her husband. "I knew he was a survivor, that he had no family and that he was in camps, but it was a taboo subject. Whenever I asked, he would tell me a few things, but he wouldn't want to go into details, and I didn't want to upset him, so I learned not to ask."

The Klainmans would return to Poland twice more, most recently as part of a program to bring Jewish children to Poland to teach them firsthand about the horrors of the Holocaust.

YAD VASHEM MOURNS THE PASSING OF BENJAMIN MEED

Born Benjamin Miedzyrzecki on February 19, 1918, in Warsaw, Poland; died October 22, 2006 of pneumonia following a lengthy illness; survived by his wife of 61 years, Vladka, his children, Steven Meed and Anna Scherzer, and five grandchildren.

Benjamin Miedzyrzecki was raised in Warsaw, Poland, in a religiously observant home. His father was a tanner and a member of the

Agudat Yisrael Party and the Zionist Mizrahi movement.

Young Benjamin studied first in yeshiva school but then attend-

ed public high schools and became comfortable with Polish language and culture. He was attending business school at the outbreak of hostilities in 1939.

In 1940, when the ghetto was officially established, the Miedzyrzecki family already lived within it and took in members of their extended family. Benjamin was made to labor removing bricks from bombed-out buildings to send to Germany for reuse. He became a smuggler, trading goods for scarce food, and it was thus that he met his future wife, Feigele Peltel (later called Vladka), who was, as a courier in the Jewish resistance, a hero in her own right.

Posing as a Pole with forged papers, Benjamin smuggled his family out of the ghetto and into a hiding place behind a false wall above a sausage factory in a non-Jewish part of Warsaw. Through Feigele, he became involved in the resistance as an expert on constructing hiding places.

He lost a brother and a sister in the war, but his parents and another sister

survived. After Warsaw was liberated, in early 1945, Benjamin's father insisted that he marry Feigele, with whom he was living.

In 1946, after various travails that found them briefly in a British lockup on the Belgian border, Benjamin and Feigele managed to immigrate to New York under the sponsorship of the Jewish Labor Committee.

Meed became involved in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Committee in 1964, and in 1968 he participated in ceremonies in New York to mark the 25th anniversary

of the uprising.

He was a founder of both the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York and the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., where he was chairman of the committee that oversaw the creation of the museum's permanent exhibits.

The Meeds helped plan the 1981 World Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors held in Israel, the first event of its kind. That same year, the organizers established the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors to prepare for a 1983 gathering in Washington, D.C., which attracted 20,000 survivors and their families. Mr. Meed served as president of the American Gathering from its inception until his death.

"Ben Meed epitomized the survivors of the Warsaw ghetto uprising and the survivor community as a whole," the director of the Museum of Jewish Heritage, David Marwell, said. "His passing is a poignant reminder that the survivor community is getting smaller and smaller."



SAVING THE JEWS

(Continued from page 4)

involved the total annihilation of the world's 19 million Jews, including Europe's eleven million. Consequently, argues the author, FDR deserves praise for depriving Germany of fully accomplishing this monstrous design by ending the war as soon as he did.

Roosevelt's waged war included essential aid for the U.S.'s embattled allies, the British and the Russian. Assisting the British in North Africa was also intended, contends Rosen, to prevent Rommel's troops from reaching Palestine and eliminating its Jewish population. Early on, following the events of *Kristallnacht* of November 9 and 10, 1938, with the first mass attack on Jews and synagogues, FDR sent a clear message by withdrawing the American ambassador to Germany. A sore point is the ill-fated voyage of the SS. St. Louis with 936 Jewish refugees aboard, originating in Hamburg, Germany in May 1939. The ship was turned away from Cuba and the U.S. and forced to return to Europe in spite of the work of Henry Morgenthau, Secretary of the Treasury, ultimately resulting in the murder of 227 of the passengers by the Nazis.

FDR's assistants, stresses Rosen, prevented the death of many more when persuading countries other than Germany to accept them. He also asserts that FDR's sympathy for the refugees' plight was

thwarted by the tough immigration policy, and that the controversial non-bombing of the railways leading to Auschwitz or the death camp itself was due to FDR's reluctance to kill inmates as well as being preoccupied by pressing issues such as the D-Day invasion. Jewish leaders were on both sides of the fence concerning bombing Auschwitz. FDR's genuine support for the Jews, when that was not popular, is also expressed according to Rosen in the unsuccessful effort to convince Saudi Arabia's King Ibn Saud in February, 1945, of the urgency of a Palestinian home for the Holocaust's survivors.

In the book's Foreword, historian Gerhard L. Weinberg calls us to remember the times' context and the great American struggle, including over half a million Jewish soldiers, to defeat humanity's enemy. In the Afterword, Harvard professor Alan M. Dershowitz cautions that no president, even as great as FDR, is beyond reproach and that he should have fired Breckinridge Long, Special Assistant Secretary of State, for his obstructionist conduct. This important book provides us with a more balanced perspective for further critical discussion of a watershed period, even as lingering and painful questions persist.

Rabbi Israel Zoberman, spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Chaverim in Virginia Beach. He was born in Kazakhstan in 1945 to Polish Holocaust survivors.



בס"ד

Hillel Community Day School Presents

No Child's Play

An exhibit of the Yad Vashem Art Museum in Israel



and Eli Zborowski

Founder and Chairman, American and International Societies for Yad Vashem
Recipient, Yad Vashem 2006 Lifetime Achievement Award
Holocaust Survivor



Opening Night - South Florida Premiere
Tuesday, February 6 / 18 Shevat 5767

7:00 PM - Private Reception for Ma'Ayan Society
8:00 PM - Main Program

Exhibit Hours
February 7 - February 8
8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Hillel
Rose and Lew Goodman Beit Midrash
19000 NE 25th Avenue, North Miami Beach

Dairy Reception for Ma'Ayan Society

RSVP - 305.931.2831 ext 588 - rsvp@hillel-nmb.net

No Child's Play opens a window into the world of children during the Holocaust.

Unlike other Holocaust exhibitions, it does not focus on statistics or descriptions of physical violence. Instead, toys, games, artwork, diaries, and poems displayed on poster boards provide a glimpse into children's lives during the Holocaust. They show how everyday items became treasures and sources of comfort and companionship.

Join Eli Zborowski for his introduction of No Child's Play, a story of survival and struggle and a reminder why we must teach our children.

Parents are encouraged to bring their children.

IN A CONFINED SILENCE

An exhibition of the mixed media photography by Miriam Brysk entitled "In a confined Silence" opened January, 12 in the Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center of Florida.

"In a confined Silence" is a collection of mixed media photographs by self-taught artist Miriam Brysk, who served as a professor at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston and who now lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Brysk was born in Warsaw, Poland in March 1935. After the German occupation



Hiding in the Forest
This piece depicts a woman from the ghetto of Warsaw, Poland, who was hidden in a forest during the Holocaust. The woman is wearing a dark, textured garment, possibly a blanket or a heavy coat, and her expression is one of weariness and despair. The background is dark and indistinct, emphasizing the isolation and danger of her situation.

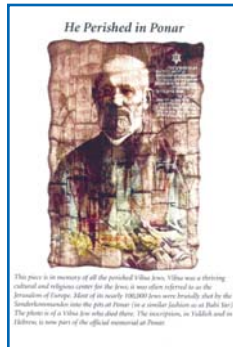


Kaddish in Warsaw
This piece depicts a man in a dark coat, possibly a survivor of the Holocaust, who is shown in a state of grief and despair. The man is looking down, and his expression is one of sorrow. The background is dark and indistinct, emphasizing the isolation and pain of his experience.

in 1939, she and her parents escaped to the town of Lida, but that city fell in 1941 and its Jews herded into ghetto. Most were killed, but Miriam and her family survived until rescued by Jewish partisans in

1942. Her father helped the Russian partisans to open a hospital in a nearby forest and eventually was awarded the Order of Lenin by the Russian government. They later fled to Italy to escape the Soviet invasion and finally arrived in America in February 1947.

Art has helped Miriam Brysk come to terms with the privations she experienced in an upbringing "filled with hopelessness and darkness". This art depicts what she calls "the raw pain" of her childhood as she relived it through psychotherapy.



He Perished in Ponar
This piece is a memory of all the people who were killed in the Ponar ghetto. The man's face is shown in a state of grief and despair, with a dark, textured background that emphasizes the isolation and pain of his experience.

All the pieces began as photographs. Each image depicts a real Jew who died in the Holocaust.

"The images you see in this exhibit are real. The people are real. They actually lived during the Holocaust," Miriam Brysk has stated. "It was very important to me to make the work authentic - not to sensationalize, but to give these people the dignity of their lives."

The exhibit will be on display through March 23, 2007. For more information call (407) 628-0555.

Martyrdom & Resistance

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