The American Society for Yad Vashem Annual Spring Luncheon:

**“M’CHAYIL L’CHAYIL”**

Committee Chairperson, Elizabeth Wilf; Luncheon Chairperson, Adina Burian; Guests of honor: Gladys Halpern and Rita Levy, and Dear Friends:

At our first Spring Luncheon seven years ago, we honored the noted Holocaust scholar, Professor Nachuma Tec. At that time, Prof. Tec talked about gender differences during the Holocaust. She said that men and women traveled different roads to their final destination. While husbands and fathers were the first to suffer public humiliation and instant death, mothers and wives struggled to keep their starving families away from death. Together, men and women, and each in their own way, demonstrated enormous resilience and courage. Ultimately, however, one’s “Jewishness” rather than gender was the determining factor in annihilation. It is not surprising that following the war, survivors sought mates who had shared this horrific life-experience. Who else, other than another survivor, could possibly understand what we had been through? In marriage, we forged partnerships that produced families and created new lives in new lands. While husbands and fathers went out to make a living, wives and mothers became the backbone of family and communal life. It was the women that enabled families to flourish and the tenacity of these partnerships that made possible the establishment of formal organizations for commemorating the Shoah. This afternoon’s program is a celebration of successive generations of women engaged with our organization in Holocaust remembrance. The survivor generation is represented by Elizabeth Wilf, this year’s Committee Chairperson and last year’s honoree, and by Gladys Halpern, whom we are privileged to honor today. As a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and a person who has lent her vitality to numerous communal organizations, Gladys is a role model for her family and for all women.

Since its inception, Gladys and Sam have been active with the American Society for Yad Vashem. Gladys owes her survival to a Christian family who hid her and her mother during the war. As an expression of gratitude, the Halpers who are Yad Vashem benefactors supported the refurbishment of Yad Vashem’s Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations. Rita Levy is a member of the Second Generation, whom we are delighted to honor today as well. She is the proud daughter of survivors Nathan Katz, z”l and Sima Katz. Nathan and Sima are outstanding examples of the partnership of which I just spoke. They rose from the ashes of the Holocaust to build a life for themselves and their family in the United States. While the German Nazi war machine annihilated most of their extended family, it could not rob the Katzes of their basic value system. Perseverance, optimism and acts of chesed which were ingrained in them before the war are the values that they have ably passed along to their children and grandchildren. Rita has enthusiastically embraced her parents’ legacy and is committed to its perpetuation through her children.

For the first time this year, members of the Third generation, represented by our Young Leadership Associates, have taken a prominent leadership role in this luncheon. We are grateful for the dedication of Caroline Massel, Chair of the Young leadership Associates; Adina Biener, Luncheon Chair; and Yonina Gomberg and Julie Kopel, Luncheon Co-Chairs. Our choice of a Guest Speaker was also informed by our desire to be future-oriented. Kevin Haworth is part of a cadre of gifted young writers in their thirties and forties who have chosen to explore Holocaust themes in their work. We are pleased that Kevin accepted our invitation to share his thoughts and reflections with us this afternoon. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Rachelle Grossman, our Events Coordinator who, together with the staff, is responsible for the Luncheon arrangements.

On behalf of the American Society for Yad Vashem I thank all of you for participating in this wonderful event. I conclude by extending our most heartfelt congratulations to Gladys Halpern and her family and to Rita Levy and her family. May you each go “m’chayil l’chayil” from strength to strength.

(Coverage continues on pages 8-9)
YOM HASHOAH OBSERVED AROUND THE WORLD

U.S., MANHATTAN, NY: The Holocaust is a grim reminder that Jews must be active in shining a light on it wherever it occurs in the world. Sen. Charles Schumer warned at a candlelight ceremony in lower Manhattan marking Holocaust Remembrance Day that "Thinking of the Holocaust should move us to fight other genocides as strongly as we can, because they didn't believe in it." Germany would carry out Hitler's maniacal plan of extermination, he added.

"There is something one can never forget," he said.

De roundup survivor Ray Kaner, 78, of New York, recalled the horrors she witnessed at Auschwitz when she was 11. "A lot of people say it never happened, but I have never forgotten. The only way to respond is to go and tell your story," said Kaner, whose parents and two brothers were killed.

Held for the first time at the museum at 36 Battery Place, the event drew more than 1,000 Holocaust survivors, many with grandchildren in tow.

The theme this year was of passing the torch to the "third generation" symbolized by a procession of 36 elderly survivors lighting candles with their grown grandchildren.

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The issue of Holocaust denial featured prominently at a public hearing in the European parliament on how to combat racism and xenophobia in Europe. MEPs discussed a German proposal to punish denial of Holocaust denial as a crime in the whole European Union.

Two years ago, Luxembourg tried to use its EU presidency to push through legislation to unify legal standards for Holocaust denial but was blocked by Italy, Britain and Denmark on the grounds that the proposed rules breached freedom of speech and civil liberties.

Citing such legislation requires unanimity among the 27 EU member states. Citing its particular historic responsibility due to its Nazi past, Germany, which holds the six-month EU rotating presidency, says it wants EU member states to adopt the proposed legislation as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, a German blueprint holds the six-month EU rotating presidency on the grounds that the proposed rules breached freedom of speech and civil liberties. A German blueprint says that racist declarations or Holocaust attacks in Europe, a German blueprint holds the six-month EU rotating presidency. MEPs discussed a German proposal to punish denial of Holocaust denial as a crime in the whole European Union. Two years ago, Luxembourg tried to use its EU presidency to push through legislation to unify legal standards for Holocaust denial but was blocked by Italy, Britain and Denmark on the grounds that the proposed rules breached freedom of speech and civil liberties. 

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MEP said, on the other hand, that “freedom of speech” in the EU text. She said that she understood the need to prevent Holocaust denial but was blocked by Italy, Britain and Denmark on the grounds that the proposed rules breached freedom of speech and civil liberties.

Fighting racism in Europe: Criminalizing Holocaust denial? Would not be prosecuted if they were expressed in a way that did not incite hatred against an individual or a group of people. As the hearing in Brussels, Martine Roure, a French Socialist MEP, suggested that the Third Reich did not enter the ghettos they had themselves created, show that we must redouble our efforts to ban this type of historical revisionism. A veil of anti-Semitism. Would be, however, for each Member State remain to decide how to punish such acts. Laws criminalizing Holocaust denial already exist in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece and Italy. Stavros Lambrinidis, a Socialist Greek MEP, said on the other hand, that “freedom of speech” is most important to be protected. “There is no question that the Nazi genocide started with words and incite to hatred but I wonder if I would never be forgotten.”

EL SALVADORAN SEEK MEDAL FOR DIPLOMAT WHO HELD NAZI WOOL HELLS

The Salvadoran government said it will seek a posthumous medal for diplomat Jose Arturo Castellanos, who gave up his citizenship certificates to as many as 40,000 Jews during the Holocaust. Representing a tiny country almost half a world away, the diplomat helped tens of thousands of Jews. In post-war Norway, the authorities have never accepted responsibility for alleged cases of harassment dating back up to 60 years.

Many Israeli Jews fear another Holocaust. A race to develop the weapons needed to do so – mass recognition of another nation today as fertile ground for the birth of another anti-Jewish genocide. But a new study showed that acts of violence and intimidation against Jews worldwide doubled in 2006 over the previous year. The countries that experienced the sharpest rise in anti-Semitism were in Europe, home of the first Holocaust, according to the Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Anti-Semitism.

Some people to jail for their words would have saved us from the Holocaust or rather would have transformed them into heroes,” he added. “There should be a clear line to define what should be punished. In democracy, freedom of speech should be protected as long as it is not incited, in any circumstances. I come from a country which suffered a dictatorship and I consider it very dangerous to allow anybody to judge what can be said and what cannot.”

I n January, Justice Commissioner Franco Frattini told an MEP that Holocaust denial is a veiled form of anti-Semitism. A report by the EU Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia in Vienna shows how to punish such acts. Laws criminalizing Holocaust denial already exist in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece and Italy. Stavros Lambrinidis, a Socialist Greek MEP, said on the other hand, that “freedom of speech” is most important to be protected.

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Roure, a French Socialist MEP, said that according to the law, it has to be based on facts. The facts surrounding the efforts by Castellanos, who died at age 86 in his homeland in 1977. Castellanos is also listed as one of the rescuers of the “rescuers of including negationism” in the EU text. She said that she understood the need to prevent Holocaust denial but was blocked by Italy, Britain and Denmark on the grounds that the proposed rules breached freedom of speech and civil liberties.

She said it was founded because many survivors, including tens of thousands of Jews. The Yad Vashem title is granted by the Yad Vashem authority’s public committee, led by a retired Supreme Court judge. Castellanos would be the first Salvadoran to receive it.

At one-third of the 500 respondents said they believe another Holocaust is a very real possibility. About one-third of the 500 respondents said they believe another Holocaust is a very real possibility. Apart from Iran – whose present leadership has a clear desire to make annihilate the Jewish state, and is in a race to develop the weapons needed to do so – most recognize another nation today as fertile ground for the birth of another anti-Jewish genocide. But a new study showed that acts of violence and intimidation against Jews worldwide doubled in 2006 over the previous year. The countries that experienced the sharpest rise in anti-Semitism were in Europe, home of the first Holocaust, according to the Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Anti-Semitism.

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REVIEWED BY MICHAEL R. MARRUS

Karen Stern, in “Kristallnacht: Prelude to Destruction,” by Martin Gilbert, demonstrates that Kristallnacht was a critical turning point in the Holocaust. The book is a comprehensive and well-researched account of the events leading up to and including Kristallnacht, the pogrom that took place on the night of November 9-10, 1938. The pogrom marked the beginning of a series of events that led to the mass murder of Jews in Europe.

In the book, Gilbert provides a detailed account of the events leading up to Kristallnacht, including the role of the German government in encouraging antisemitic violence. He also describes the reactions of the Jewish community and the actions taken by local authorities.

The book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in understanding the history of the Holocaust. Gilbert’s research is extensive and his writing is clear and concise. He provides a balanced and nuanced view of the events, and his analysis is based on a wide range of sources.

Overall, “Kristallnacht: Prelude to Destruction” is a well-written and informative book that provides a valuable contribution to the study of the Holocaust. It is highly recommended for anyone interested in this topic.


REVIEWED BY ADAM SHARON

In this review, Adam Sharon discusses the book “Our Holocaust” by Amir Gutfreund. The book is a perspective on the Holocaust from the viewpoint of a German Jew who was able to escape from Auschwitz.

Sharon notes that Gutfreund’s account is unique because it offers a personal and intimate perspective on the Holocaust. He describes the author’s experiences in Auschwitz and the concentration camps, and the impact that these experiences had on his life.

Sharon also notes that Gutfreund’s account is valuable because it offers a different perspective on the Holocaust. Unlike many other accounts that focus on the experiences of Jews in the camps, Gutfreund’s account focuses on the experiences of a German Jew who was able to escape.

Overall, “Our Holocaust” is a valuable and thought-provoking account of the Holocaust. It offers a unique perspective on the experiences of Jews during this dark period in history. Sharon recommends that this book be read by anyone interested in the Holocaust.
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IT IS A STRONGEST, AND ALSO ITS GREATEST WEAKNESS. IT IS A STRENGTH...BETTER THAN THE REST. THE SIGHT OF ANY NEW TUNNEL, IT BEHIND BARRICADED PRECINCTS IS THE TEST ON WHETHER OR NOT WE ARE ACTUALLY RESISTING...IT IS A TEST, A TRUE TEST OF HOW MUCH REMAINS OF THE JEWISH SPIRIT IN US.

THE EXHIBITION'S CURATOR, YITZHAK MAIS, FORMER DIRECTOR OF THE YAD VASHEM MUSEUM IN JERUSALEM AND A CURATOR OF THE PLANNED ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM IN SPOKANE, VALUES THE COMPREHENSIVE AND BALANCED APPROACH TO HISTORY (AND THE LACK OF JUDGMENT) AS IMPORTANT.

THE JEWISH PARTISAN ABBA KOVNER, LEFT, AND SHMERKEL HACZERZEGINSKI, RIGHT, WERE AMONG THE LIBERATORS OF VIENA, VIENNA, IN 1944. TREVIBINKA AND AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU, THREE REBELLION SITES ON THE EASTERN FRONT, WERE CAMPS WHERE THE NAZI H/NS KILLED MILLIONS DURING THE WAR. THE EXHIBITION PRESENTS A VISUAL HISTORY OF RESISTANCE IN EMINCE TO THE NAZIS, CREATING A MUSEUM空間 FOR VISITORS TO REFLECT ON THEIR OWN UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORY. THE JEWISH VENZERO HIGH SCHOOL, THE LITHUANIAN TEENAGERS GUESS TO A TEACHER'S TOLERANCE CENTER AS A WAY TO TEACH THEM ABOUT THE NAZI DEATH CAMPS.
apartment block where, 65 years ago, she first to tell her story, in a BBC who escaped the Nazis in circumstances - those who had come to France but were not born there for deportation. Among them were her parents. Ms. Rappoport was born of an immigrant British mother and has spent her entire adult life in England. But her distant line, born on a warm August afternoon in German-occupied Paris, in 1942. The French police were collaborating with the Nazis in the round-up of non-French Jews - those who had come to France but were not born there for deportation. Among them were her parents. Ms. Rappoport would have been taken, too, if not for the courage and sheer audacity of the woman across the third floor landing, Mme Yvonne Collomb, who removed the child from the flat - even as French police waited for her parents to be stuck at home for a child.” Suzanne, but I can't look after her. I can't from the Leeds shoebox, reads: “I’m sorry to put you in a difficult position over this, Suzanne, but I can't look after her. I can't be stuck at home for a child.”

After the war, Geulen-Herscovici married a Jewish survivor and raised two children of her own. But she also maintained contact with some of her Jewish children, many of whom later immigrated to Israel. “And since then I have never been alone. Through every moment of my life, you have been with me and I love you all like I love my own children,” she said.

Shaul Harel, 70, was one of those children whom Geulen-Herscovici saved from the gas chambers of Auschwitz. To honor her and others like her, the Israel doctor organized an international conference in Israel for the Belgian children hidden during the Holocaust, of which there are an estimated 3,000.

The five-day conference coincided with Israel’s official Holocaust Remembrance Day. The group, which includes some 160 survivors, has shared its survival stories publicly after many years of keeping mum. Harel said doing so together with the woman who saved them made it more significant. “When you meet the woman who is responsible for you being alive,” he said, “his voice trailing, “it’s very emotional.” Dozens accompanied Geulen-Herscovici as she strolled slowly through the museum. Many shed tears as she neared an exhibit and pointed to a black and white photograph on the wall showing along with two of her children in her arm. “That’s Jackie,” she said, motioning to one of the kids.

She said she remembered them all, down to each one’s serial number in her diary. “Even in the darkest hour of humanity there were still a few rays of light,” said the Belgian Ambassador to Israel Danielle del Marmol. “Andree Geulen-Herscovici was one of those.”

In 1989, Geulen-Herscovici was recog- nized by the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial as a Righteous Among the Nations – an honor he wanted to non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust, including Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg. Among these, only a few hundred have been granted honorary citizenship by Israel.

She belongs to this unique club of courageous and honorable human beings,” said Avner Shalev, director of Yad Vashem. “This is another way for us to say thank you.”

The soft-spoken Geulen- Herscovici played down her heroics. “What I did was merely my duty. Disobeying the laws of the state was just the normal thing to do,” she said in French. Her actions altered the lives of hundreds of children, many of whom reunited with her recently, along with their own children and grandchildren.

Henk Lederhandler was 12 years in the spring of 1943, when Geulen-Herscovici took him in. He said he still vividly remembers the first meeting with the lovely young woman who would become his guardian angel.

“You saved us, you rescued us from the fingers of the Nazis,” he said at the ceremony. “If it weren’t for you, I wouldn’t be here today. You are like a mother to us all.”

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First reported by Associated Press

D uring World War II, Andre Geulen- Herscovici saved more than 300 Jewish children in Belgium, risking her own life to hide them from the Nazis. It was an emotional ceremony, Israel honored the 86-year-old woman, granting her honorary citizenship and reuniting her with dozens of the people she rescued.

In 1942, the Brussels teacher witnessed a Gestapo raid on a school to arrest Jewish children. She then joined a rescue organization and for more than two years collected children and hid them in Christian homes and monasteries under assumed identities.

Throughout the war, she looked over them, keeping a secret record of their original names. At the end of the war, she gathered them once again and returned them to their families.

Correspondence from southern Poland shows that many of the kids.

Minister Yossi Milo of the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption said last month: “All of us, as a country, must honor the contributions of the Righteous Among the Nations.”

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First reported by Associated Press

BY IAN HERBERT, THE INDEPENDENT

T he fragments of the story were there all along, bundled into a shoebox which lay, unopened, in a spare room at Suzanne Collomb’s apartment in Leeds. There were the postcards her father had sent, asking after her but protecting her from view in a long, thick che-

nise tablecloth, and she asked to be left with a pair of slippers made from old dusters. It was Suzanne’s job to polish the floor with them. “I loved skating around the slippery kitchen on them,” Ms. Rappoport recalled. “I knew how to do it, but it soon became unsafe for a child, whose existence was well known, to be confined so close to home.”

Ms. Collomb tapped into a network which was hiding children in rural France and sent her to the village of Mondoubleau in the Loire Valley, whose role in hiding children has been documented. It was here that the reality of her parents’ absence and her own grim existence – with hours hidden from view in a cellar – began to dawn on her, though she did not know it, those visits whose care she had been entrusted did not share Mme Collomb’s empathy. A letter from a family in Mondoubleau to Mme Collomb and recently recovered from the Leeds shoebox reads: “I’m sorry to put you in a difficult position over Suzanne, but I can’t look after her. I can’t be stuck at home for a child.”

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Aged by hate and driven by revenge to a lifelong passion would suggest a man ravaging war criminals, Wiesenthal's relentless researcher with a talent for obsession in his quest for justice. Unable to return to a "normal" life after his liberation from Mauthausen concentration camp in upper Austria, Wiesenthal was driven to follow lifelong obsession in his quest for justice. A portrait of Simon Wiesenthal and his wife Eva, Pinkas concentration camps, Wiesenthal immediately offered his services. Underweight, weak and completely untrained, U.S. officials placated the excited Wiesenthal and unofficially "commissioned" him to submit information. Wiesenthal caught the attention of the Nazis, explicitly detailed and painstakingly categorized, incited a passion and obsession that ended only with his death in 2005. Credited with providing information to bring nearly 1,100 Nazi war criminals to justice, Wiesenthal, the man labeled "the man who pursued Nazi torturers with a passionate fervor," brought thousands of Nazi war criminals to trial, assailing the complicity of the neutrals. The Vatican backed off a threat to boycott a Philadelphia premiere of "I Have Never Forgotten You" that "reveals a man who pursued former Nazis in the name of justice, but more importantly, for the friends, 89 family members and fellow sufferers and casualties of the Holocaust.

I Have Never Forgotten You" is not an easy documentary to watch, nor does it soften the brutality of the Holocaust, but it does allow the images on the screen depict horrific crimes, murderers and torturers. The film provides a chance to visualize the commendable work achieved by Wiesenthal throughout his lifetime to honor the lives lost at the hands of the criminals he unearthed. Labeled "the man who could not stop thinking about the guilt he carried," Wiesenthal's obsession was apparent in the documentary. Wiesenthal's obsession and drive were not new to him. The Vatican has been irked by a picture of Pope Pius XII, a former Nazi, being shown in a film. After a decade of relentless research, Wiesenthal published his neutral position in the image condemning the extermination of the Jews and "maintained his neutral position throughout the war.

Yad Vashem issued a statement in response to the stripper urging the Vatican to open its wartime archives and offering to change the picture caption on Pius XII, the former Polish town for the annual March of the Living. Some 8,000 people, some teenagers to elderly Holocaust survivors, assembled in the north Polish town for the annual March of the Living. After the wax of a ram's horn signaled the start of the March, the marchers began walking the three kilometers from the infamous "Arbeit macht Frei" gateway that leads out of Auschwitz, to the ruins of the gas chamber at Birkenau.

Six survivors intoned the kaddish, the Jewish prayer of mourning, from a podium at the railroad at the Birkenau annex of the camp where Nazi guards selected new victims. At the Wiro's death, 9,000 of my comrades were sent to immediate death in the gas chambers, others to miserable existences as slave laborers. The kaddish brought to a close a two-hour ceremony at the end of the March of the Living, a tribute to the estimated six million Jews — half of them from Poland, which before World War II had Europe's biggest Jewish population — who perished in the Holocaust. The mass has been held since 1988, and is aimed at stilling the voices of Holocaust deniers. It is open to people of all faiths.

GERMANY, STUTTGART: Thirty-four Jews who died serving as slave laborers for the Nazis were honored with the dedication of gravestones in a ceremony at the US Airfield where their mass grave was recently discovered. More than 200 mourners were on hand for ceremony to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day, dedicating the graves to the anonymous victims of the Echterdingen concentration camp that were discovered in September 2005 during construction work at the airfield. Benjamin Gelhorn, a survivor of the Nazi camp system who spent three months at Echterdingen, said the kaddish prayer of mourning to close the ceremony.

HUNGARY: In Budapest, Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany on April 17 called for all members of parliament to sign a "zero tolerance" manifesto against hate speeches as parliament marked Holocaust Memorial Day. "Words and acts can give birth to violence, but we can also set an example," Gyurcsany wrote in the manifesto, which he read out in parliament. "We know that anti-Semitism and racism paved the way for the Holocaust, the most inhumane event in our history." Hungary's main right-wing opposition party Fidesz, which normally walks out when Gyurcsany speaks, remained in parliament during the speech out of respect for the memorial event. Hungary began remembering the victims of the Holocaust on April 16, when Gyurcsany joined Jewish leaders and other politicians on a torch-lit march through Budapest.

The marchers — including Efraim Zuroff, the Simon Wiesenthal Center's chief Nazi hunter — marked their way from a Holocaust memorial museum to the downtown Dohany Synagogue, the last place where Hungary's last public service as a public place before it was destroyed during World War II.

Soviet troops liberated the ghetto on January 18, 1945, releasing around 70,000 Jews from their captivity. Approximately 30,000-40,000 Jews survived outside of the ghetto, kept safe with the help of foreign diplomats and ordinary citizens. However, around half of the 200,000 Jews living in Budapest prior to the outbreak of war perished at the Gestapo, many of them sent to concentration camps or lined up on the banks of the Danube to be shot. In total, over 400,000 Jews were sent to death camps from Hungary in 1944, mainly to the Auschwitz death camp. Much of the butchered was carried out under the direction of Nazi-aligned Hungarian Arrow Cross Party, which came to power briefly in 1944.
YONINA GOMBERG, GRANDDAUGHTER OF GLADYS HALPERN AND MEMBER OF THE THIRD GENERATION

The life of my grandmother, Gladys Landau Halpern, has always inspired me. She had a happy childhood in the small town of Zolkiew, Poland until she and her family were forced to live in the Zolkiew ghetto. In January 1943, her father, Ephraim Landau, sent her out of the ghetto and into hiding in the home of the righteous gentile Marian Haliczki. Tragically, the day she left the ghetto was the last day she saw her father. My grandmother was soon joined by her mother, Sala, and two of Sala’s sisters. They spent eighteen months in hiding, starving and overwhelmed with fear, waiting for the Nazis to come. Thank G-d that day never came and on July 26, 1944, she, her mother and aunts were liberated.

In 2003, sixty years after my grandmother went into hiding, many members of my family and I accompanied my grandparents, Gladys and Sam, who has his own miraculous story of survival, to Poland and the Ukraine. Chills rushed up my spine as I stood in the small room where my elegant grandmother existed with fear and hunger for eighteen months. It was overpowering. My whole life I had known how my grandmother survived the Holocaust, but it was only then that I began to comprehend what she experienced, although I know that I will never fully understand. Over the course of that trip, I spent much time wondering how my grandparents, and many survivors like them, were able to rebuild their lives in the aftermath of Hitler’s destruction. And yet, that’s exactly what they did. Despite all that she endured, on June 30, 1946, my 17-year-old grandmother married her beloved Sam. Together, they had the courage to create a family, beginning in 1948 with the birth of my father Fred in Europe, followed with the birth of his three brothers, David, Jack and Murray, in the United States.

The theme of this afternoon’s luncheon is: A Woman's Legacy – “Not by Might, Not by Power, But with Love.” This defines the way my grandmother lives her life. Rather than have a heavy heart, filled with hate and anger, my grandmother focuses on love. Just as she was taught by her mother, my grandmother is a loving and devoted wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She is a true esthet chayil, whose generosity and kindness towards her family, friends, and even perfect strangers, is something I strive to emulate. Her revenge, her triumph over Hitler is that she and my grandfather raised a family committed to Judaism, to Israel and to Holocaust remembrance.

With gratitude to Hashem and to the Haliczki family who saved her, it is my privilege today to join you in paying tribute to a most deserving woman, a pillar of strength for our family, my grandmother, Gladys Halpern.
Thank you, Julie, for that kind introduction. Thank you to the American Society for Yad Vashem and Eli Zborowski for this special honor. And thank you, Rochel Berman, for always knowing how to make things happen.

Mazel tov to my co-honoree today, Gladys Halpern. A well-deserved kovet.

I want to thank you all for being here today, my family, my friends, and especially my Mom's "chavertes." You know, when I was a little girl, I thought all the women of mom's generation had names like Chyeneleh, Chialeh, Tzileh and Sonyechkeh. I thought that every family spoke a second language inside the house, and that everybody's parents either hosted or went to parties every Saturday night. Wasn't that true for all of you?

As I got older, of course, I discovered that our home was different, my parents were different, and so was I. My parents are Holocaust survivors. I could never really make the connection between the parents with whom I lived and the Holocaust stories I read and learned about in school.

I didn't really understand and internalize the connection until right before my wedding. I was looking over the guest list and asked my father, "Who are all these people? In Cleveland? In Chicago? I don't know them. Why are you inviting them to my wedding?" And he answered me by telling me specific stories about each of them and their experiences together during the war. He explained that they made a vow to each other that if they survived this war, that they would always share each other's simchas, no matter where they ended up in the world.

So you see, the milestones in our lives were precious and value-laden beyond the mere celebration of the moment. Every occasion became significant, not to be taken for granted.

My wedding was a reason for all of you to celebrate. My simcha was your simcha.

Remember Mom and Dad's 50th wedding anniversary party? How many of you said, "This is like it's a party that's celebrating my own anniversary"? When Rebecca, at 9 years old stood in front of over 200 of you to sing a medley of songs in honor of her bubbie and zaydie, she was excited, but, understandably nervous. I told her, "You will never perform in front of an audience that loves you more."

Rebecca and Matthew understood that their bat and bar mitzvahs were occasions to, once again, share their simchas and affirm life and keep the promise that my parents made with their "chevreh" — if you survive, you will share each other's simchas.

At Rebecca's bat mitzvah we took the opportunity to not only enjoy the occasion, but to honor the Lithuanian Christian family (whom we recognized at Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations) who hid my grandfather, parents, aunt and uncle and cousins. Local television stations and newspapers ran the story. We were able to tell the story of what happened to the world.

And then Dad wrote his story in a book, "Teach Us to Count Our Days." As he said in his forward, he wrote the book..."so you'll know."

In his book, Dad also said that tzedakkah was always a hallmark of his life. In order to continue the legacy further, my husband, David and I will be working with Yad Vashem to endow an educational program that will embody these inter-generational values passed down from my parents to us and to our children, and, we hope, to theirs.

Share your good times, give tzedakkah, but always remember and never forget: tell the story —"so you'll know." That's what I want to keep doing — tell the story — not just my parent's story, but all of your stories—Chialeh's, Basha's, Asia's, Gusta's — so others outside this room will know. And in a world in which people deny or minimize or FORGET the lessons of the Holocaust, it is my hope and desire that MY generation of moms — the Susan's, Debbie's and Cindy's, will continue the legacy and further the mission of Yad Vashem — "so you'll know."
"ALONE IN THE DRAWER"

BY MALKA TOR

“Tell my story. What exactly do you want? … There are many people who don’t know anything.”

And this puts me back into the same special box that I’ve been living in... alone in the drawer.”

Kaltman Bar On of Yugoslavia, Auschwitz survivor.

Despite the feeling common among survivors that “someone who was... then would never understand,” in recent years more and more survivors have contacted Yad Vashem to give oral testimony, perhaps due to a sense that time is running out. These remnants of Europe’s prewar Jewish community are seeking to preserve the memory of the vibrant Jewish world that was destroyed and the families that perished. However, as well as their personal survival experiences: they are telling their entire life stories, sometimes for the very first time.

Yad Vashem’s documentation work began with the under-ground ghetto archives and has continued in recording studios established by Yad Vashem throughout Israel — for residents and tourists alike — in cooperation with other organizations, such as Ginzach Kitzelush Hasefer and Yad Lezahava. However, many survivors are now unable to get to the studios due to advanced age and failing health, so on Holocaust Remembrance Day 2006, a national testimony-collection campaign in the homes of the survivors themselves was announced. “The collection of the people who personally experienced the horrors of the Shoah have crucial educational and moral importance,” explained Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Aviner Shalev. “They represent an essential vehicle for passing on the memory of the Holocaust and carrying on their children another generation.” (Joiel 13)

"SPOTS OF LIGHT:" TO BE A WOMAN IN THE HOLOCAUST

BY YEHUDIT INBAR

Women and children during the deportation of the Jews of Szydlowiec to the Treblinka death camp, September 1942. Nazi ideology viewed women generally as agents of fertility and, accordingly, targeted the Jewish woman for extermination, in order to thwart the rise of future generations. For their part, Jewish women in Europe at that time inhabited a largely conservative and patriarchal society, with men heading the household and women discharging traditional roles at home or helping to make a living. In place of external leadership roles, Jewish women assumed those called for “the affirmation of life:” the attempt to survive and keep others alive, in whatever situation they found themselves.

“Spots of Light” does not retell in detail the horrors these women experienced during the Holocaust, except as background information to the goal of the exhibition: the broad and diverse range of actions and responses of Jewish women to their devastatingly extreme circumstances. Some of these responses were unique; others turn out to have been typical of many. Torn between dual commitments — to their families (husbands and children) and their elderly parents — they often also assumed responsibility for other needy groups, looking out for themselves in only the most extreme cases.

Emmanuel Ringelblum, the historian who established the Ong Shabbat Archives in the Warsaw ghetto, wrote in his diary: “The future historian will have to dedicate an appropriate page to the Jewish woman in the war. She will reveal the important role in Jewish history for her courage and steadfastness. By her merit, thousands of families have managed to surmount the terror of the times.”

Jewish women in the Holocaust: applied their intellect in places that deprived them of their minds and brought strength to places where none was to be found. And in places where they and their families, so new were the right to live, they walked each step towards death infusing every additional moment of life with meaning and significance. We wish to hear their voices and tell their stories.

“Spots of Light: To Be a Woman in the Holocaust.”

Chairman of the Yad Vashem Council Joseph (Tommy) Lapid and Chairman of Yad Vashem Avner Shalev sent a letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon urging him to do everything in his power to stop the genocide in Darfur. “It is not sufficient for the international community to issue condemnations, and statements via the United Nations, while this Khartoum-sponsored genocide is taking place. Concrete steps must be taken; we must do everything to ensure that the Security Council will decide to send troops to Darfur who will be able to restore security. Every day that passes adds thousands of names to the list of dead,” they wrote.

For more than three years, genocide under the sponsorship of the Khartoum government has been taking place in Darfur. Since the beginning of the crisis, some 400,000 men, women and children have been murdered, and some 2.5 million people have become displaced. Tens of thousands of women have been raped, and thousands of sick and wounded die due to lack of medicines.

“As the heads of the Jewish people’s central organization for fighting the Holocaust — a genocide that took place while the world was silent — we feel a special obligation, as we discussed with you during your recent visit to Yad Vashem, to raise the alarm on Darfur. In order to uphold the values and commitments spilled out in the UN Charter, we urge you to use the full moral authority of your office to do everything possible to stop the genocide, to end the horrific crimes taking place in Darfur,” wrote Lapid and Shalev.

ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS PAYS TRIBUTE TO HOLOCAUST VICTIMS

Paris' top Roman Catholic leader and Archbishop of Paris, Andre Vingt-Trois, placed an orange and green wreath at a large stone memorial for the 6 million Jews who were killed during the Holocaust. During his speech at the Yad Vashem museum, he spoke about the importance of remembering the victims.

“Without hope, the remembrance of crime is the despair of man,” Vingt-Trois said. “Keeping the memory with hope, this is faith.”

Vingt-Trois’ visit to Jerusalem sent an important message that Christians, Jews and Muslims all need to come together in remembering the genocide, its Rosenberg, a Yad Vashem spokesman said.
HOLocaust EXHIBIT IN FRANCE A VITAL LESSON

BY JOHANNA J. NEUMANN

It is often said that one man can make a difference and indeed in this case the man was Gunter Demnig, an artist from Cologne. About 15 years ago, Mr. Demnig decided that large monuments to the victims of Nazi Germany were imper- sonal, cold and quite meaningless since there were no personal, cold and quite meaningless since there were no personal

The idea was to create a way to remember the victims in a personal way, to give them a voice and a face. Mr. Demnig decided that each victim should be remembered individually, not as a number or a statistic, but as a person with a story to tell. He also wanted to make sure that the victims were not forgotten, but remembered as living beings who had a life, not just a death date. This is why he created the Stolpersteine, or stumbling blocks, as he called them.

Stolpersteine are small stone plaques with the name, date of birth and date of death of a victim of Nazi persecution, usually placed in front of the place where the person lived. They are not meant to be a permanent marker, but rather a temporary reminder of the victims.

Mr. Demnig has placed over 10,000 of these plaques throughout Europe, each one a little reminder of a person who was murdered or persecuted by the Nazis. The plaques are made of bronze and are four inches by four inches, with the name and date engraved in it. They are placed in the sidewalk, just outside the door of a house or apartment.

For example, the plaque for Anna Segal, who was a Jewish woman from Germany, is placed outside the building where she lived. The plaque has her name and the dates of her birth and death, and a little note about her life. It is a small reminder of a person who was taken from her family and her country.

Mr. Demnig has said that he does not want to create a museum or a memorial, but rather a living memory. He wants people to remember the victims and to think about what they did and what they stand for.

He has said, "I think that it is important to remember, but also to act. We need to speak out against hate and oppression. We need to be aware of what is happening in the world and to stand up for what is right."
RESISTING THE NAZIS DESPITE THE ODDS

(Continued from page 5) government turns enemy and neighbors turn away? Is it better to lie low or stand tall? And another question: “To stay or to go?”

When the scale of the Nazi ambition started to become clear, it is beyond comprehension. The show includes numerous snippets but viewpoints that capture those impressions. One woman recalls the post-Auschwitz moral universe that Levi and De Benedetti were located them both at the Shoah Memorial Museum. From the post-Auschwitz moral universe, reduced to its core...
BY MARTIN KIMEL

As the son of Holocaust survivors, I'm glad that Oprah Winfrey has chosen Elie Wiesel's Night for her book club and is planning to make her recent book an educational experience for millions of her viewers.

The Holocaust is a daunting subject to teach, in part because its ugliness is unpleasant to contemplate and in part because what happened at Auschwitz-Birkenau and elsewhere defies comprehension.

There are positive stories to be found concerning the Holocaust and its aftermath — of righteous Christians who risked their lives to save their Jewish neighbors during the war, of resilient survivors such as my parents, who left Poland years after the war and made successful lives for themselves in America. These stories deserve to be taught. But they're only a small part of what happened.

Last fall, I made a pilgrimage to Auschwitz-Birkenau and found much uplifting about the massive Birkenau death camp, where roughly 1.5 million men, women and children perished, about 90 percent of them Jews. The Nazis couldn't have done what they did, there are more than 250,000 surviving witnesses to the Holocaust and of acknowledging their deportees who escaped justice when he fled to Argentina.

The Milan court ruled that Priebke's first trial was Improperly conducted and directed to the at trial at which he was given the life sentence. The third charge was rejected due to evidence Goni provided of Priebke's entry papers to Argentina.

“Fighting in the puppet’s court has the same path as so many other war criminals, it was obvious that he was not guilty. Priebke can appeal to Italy’s Supreme Court, but Goni said that was highly unlikely.”

GONI'S MOST RECENT BOOK

(Continued on page 15)

ITALIAN COURT REJECTS LAWSUIT
BY NAZI WAR CRIMINAL

BY JOE GOLDMAN, JTA

In Argentina, a city in Argentina's western Andes Mountains, by an ABC-TV team of reporter Sam Donaldson and producers Harry Phillips and Dodell Herstet.

He was deported to Italy, where he was found responsible for the deaths of 335 people. In what way he was to be known as the Ardeatine Caves Massacre. Priebke and a group of SS officers rounded up Jews who were rounded up in the Ardeatine Caves and of acknowledging that Priebke was escaping as a war criminal. Granta Books of London and later by Italian publisher Harcourt Iibri as “Operazione Odessa.”

Priebke was given a life sentence, which he has been serving under house arrest in the home of his attorney, Borre. He has become an assiduous reader of books, including those by Elie Wiesel, who has written a number of books about the Holocaust and its aftermath. He has become an assiduous reader of books, including those by Elie Wiesel, who has written a number of books about the Holocaust and its aftermath.

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The banker Alois Miedl profited too. First published in Der Spiegel (Continued on page 15)

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The banker Alois Miedl profited too. First published in Der Spiegel (Continued on page 15)
FILM RECOGNIZING MAN’S WORK FINDING NAZI WAR CRIMINALS

(Continued from page 7)

Wiesenthal’s work continued through the various obstacles time and the Cold War presented to a researcher of war that was slowly becoming outdated. When Wiesenthal met with the U.S. War Crimes Association in 1947, he opened the Jewish Historical Documentation Center in Linz, Austria until 1954. Later, he reopened the Jewish Documentation Center, this time in Vienna. Although Wiesenthal’s passion brought thousands of felons to justice, he suffered for his work at the hands of the public. Neo-Nazis and Nazi sympathizers criticized his work and made personal threats against Wiesenthal, his wife Cylla, and daughter Pauline. A police guard was posted outside Wiesenthal’s house, and friends and family encouraged the researcher to leave Vienna. “A soldier must stay on the battlefield,” said Wiesenthal, “it is my duty to continue.”

Cylla, who suffered from nervous breakdowns, also pleaded with her husband to move to Israel, or to any other country. “I know you are right, I said to Cylla,” said Wiesenthal in the documentary. “But all the people we lost - your mother, my mother, our family, friends and all I saw dying in the death camps - if I gave up, I would be betraying them. So I asked her - ‘Could you live with a traitor?’”

Several films have been produced, based on Wiesenthal’s life, including Paramount Pictures’ 1974 film, “The Odessa File,” and Twentieth Century Fox’s 1978 film, “The Boys from Brazil,” in addition to a 1981 documentary produced by the Wiesenthal Center, titled “Genocide.” Wiesenthal has written several books, most notably, The Murderers Among Us, a book of his memoirs, published in 1963. Despite his various awards, Wiesenthal maintained a humble position in life, taking payment only from the films and books he published. He lived his life in an apartment in Vienna with his wife, until her death in 1980.

“I am not a Jewish James Bond or Don Quixote,” said Wiesenthal. “I am only a survivor who pays with his work for the privilege to remain alive.”

August 2000, Rabbi Marvin Hier accepted the Medal of Freedom on Wiesenthal’s behalf. The U.S.’s highest civilian honor is presented by President Clinton. Wiesenthal was only the sixth foreign citizen in the history of the U.S. to receive this honor. At the presentation, Hier gave President Clinton a letter on Wiesenthal’s behalf. In the letter, Wiesenthal wrote, “My cause is justice, not vengeance. My work is for a better tomorrow and a more secure future for our children and grandchildren who will follow us. As a firm believer that each of us are accountable before our creator, I believe that when my life has ended, I shall one day be called to meet up with those who perished and they will undoubtedly ask me, ‘What have you done?’ At that moment, I will have the honor of stepping forward and saying to them, I have never forgotten you.”

First published in The Evening Bulletin

BY YIGAL HAI, HAERETZ

A n Israeli lawyer who studied several students before he was killed in the Virginia Tech massacre was a Holocaust survivor who had escaped from Communist Romania.

Relatives said Liviu Librescu, an international aeronautics engineer and professor at Virginia Tech for 20 years, saved the lives of several students by blocking the gunman before he was gunned down in the most horrific shooting in US history, which coincided with Holocaust Remembrance Day. Thirty-two people and the gunman were killed in the campus.

Librescu’s students sent e-mails to his family recounting how he blocked the gunman’s way and saved their lives, said his son.

“My father blocked the doorway with his body and asked the students to flee,” he said. “He was seen opening windows and jumping out. We intend to look into this.”

“My father was a senior researcher,” he added. “In his field, he was number one.”

“The gun was fired at them in the hallways of the first floor of Norris Hall, and his wife,” Librescu said. “Then the boy turned a blind eye and those who helped Jews in some way — but admits to treading carefully when reporting the first two categories with students.

“I don’t know whose grandfather did what to whom, but if there’s a really very active student, then we talk about the Holocaust and his activity disappears, I tell them. ‘Don’t hate your grandfather if he killed somebody because he’s still your grandfather and you love him.’ But if he killed someone, then it’s a fact we have to say this. It’s a tragedy for that family.

One of such contacts, says the Holocaust survivors themselves — like Kahan — rely on reconciling with German-Jewish-Jew, who have shared her story with classes in Lithuania. She has also traveled to Germany and Austria to recoup her experiences.

That’s most evident in the torrent of vitriol unleashed amid stalled negotiations to return scores or bring accused Nazi-era war criminals to justice. Many older younger congregants of Beth David want for Yariv and how will the Holocaust shape future generations of Gufreeders?

The same question can apply to the younger congregants of Beth David Synagogue looking to create a healthy national identity that remains true to their parents’ and grandparents’ experiences during the Holocaust. Will (and can) a day come when the stained glass at Beth David Synagogue is no longer palatable for the worshiping community? For Amir Gutfreund, Our Holocaust is an attempt to make peace with his family’s Holocaust experiences. And yet, a nagging question remains: ‘Who will tell the stories?’ the author asks, when the generation of survivors pass away. Perhaps the answer is: Our parents. Amir Gutfreund

First published in The Jewish Press

In BALTIKS, TEACHING ABOUT SHOAH

(Continued from page 5)

By 2004, but backing up words with action has lagged, leading some to question the sincerity of the university’s pro-Israeli stance. Lithuania has no specifically designed Holocaust-studies course. Instead, lessons are folded into the broader history line and into lower-division texts. Still, the chapter runs just six pages.

Yet the chapter runs just six pages. “It wasn’t treated as something separate, just a part of history,” Benjaminas Krumas, 23, recalls of his high school lessons in Kaunas, known to Jews as historic Kovno and home to a ghetto liquidated by the Nazis in 1944. “Perhaps the teacher thought there was nothing else for it. As afraid to discuss it more. But we learned more about it from our grandparents.”

The history textbooks like Vladas Melakieni play a pivotal role. Both the Ministry of Education and the Lithuanian Jewish Community recommended the Tolerance Center that Melakieni founded as a place. “It was seven years ago that Melakieni had an epiphany. She had assigned her students to draw up family trees as a springboard to discussion of Lithuania’s various regions and names, as well as other topics.

One girl, by the name of Finkelstein, turned in her assignment with half the tree empty. “Everyone had died in 1942 or ’43,” Melakieni recalls. “At first I thought she was lazy to do a real family tree. Then I realized what had happened.”

Melakieni speaks of three categories of Lithuanians during the Holocaust — those who killed, those who turned a blind eye and those who helped Jews in some way — but admits to treading carefully when reporting the first two categories with students.

“I don’t know whose grandfather did what to whom, but if there’s a really very active student, then we talk about the Holocaust and his activity disappears, I tell them. ‘Don’t hate your grandfather if he killed somebody because he’s still your grandfather and you love him.’ But if he killed someone, then it’s a fact we have to say this. It’s a tragedy for that family.

Others trying to connect with students are the Holocaust survivors themselves — like Kahan — rely on reconciling with German-Jewish-Jew, who have shared her story with classes in Lithuania. She has also traveled to Germany and Austria to recoup her experiences.

In the carrel of Western integration dieted, the stick has vanished as well. Lacking that leverage, Jewish activists in Lithuania and elsewhere must face the reality: We have a new generation of Westerners.”

For Amir Gutfreund, Our Holocaust is an attempt to make peace with his family’s Holocaust experiences. And yet, a nagging question remains: ‘Who will tell the stories?’ the author asks, when the generation of survivors pass away. Perhaps the answer is: Our parents. Amir Gutfreund

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Martyrdom & Resistance
AMBITIOUS NAZI COUNTERFEITERING PLOT RECALLED BY HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

Adolf Burger

Burger, along with 140 other Jewish concentration camp prisoners, survived the war after being enlisted in part to an ambitious Nazi counterfeiting plot aimed at crashing the economies of the Allies.

Burger, now 89, has been living in Prague for six decades, though he was born in Slovakia’s High Tatra mountains. A book printer by trade, he was living in the capital, Bratislava, when Slovakia became a Nazi puppet state under Monsignor Jozef Tiso. Today, at home in the Prague suburb of Spolovic, Adolf Burger recalls his arrest by the Gestapo.

“The only underground organization in Slovakia in those days was the Communist Party. They recruited me to help Jews by printing counterfeit birth certificates or documents showing they had been Roman Catholics in 1938. I did that for three years before they arrested me and my wife the day before my 25th birthday, on August 11, 1942. We were planning a celebration, but that didn’t happen.”

A few days later they were sent on a Nazi train to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Burger managed to avoid one mass execution, but was deliberately infected with typhus as part of a so-called medical experiment.

The CRIMES OF I.G. FARBEN

I.G. Farben to secure a large quantity of tetraethyl lead from Standard Oil. Standard Oil compiled in a move that, according to Borkin, “materially strengthened Hitler’s hand.”

After the United States entered the war, Standard’s cooperation with I.G. Farben became a scandal. In Senate hearings, Senator Robert La Follette of Wisconsin was blunt in his criticism of the company. Standard Oil, he said, “was found by the AntiTrust Division of the Department of Justice to be conspiring with I.G. Farben ... of Germany.” I.G. Farben, through its maze of international patent agreements, is the spear-head of a major corporation.

Standard Oil, though, was not the only well-known U.S. firm to do business with the Nazi-run chemical giant. In his valuable study Wall Street and the Rise of Adolf Hitler, historian Anthony C. Sutton points out a surprising and disturbing number of American financial and industrial firms that contributed immensely to the funding that supported the rise of Nazi regime. Summarizing his research, Sutton wrote: “The evidence suggests that some members of the Wall Street elite are connected with, and certainly have influence with, all significant political groupings in the contemporary world socialist spectrum — Soviet socialism, Hitler’s national socialism, and Roosevelt’s New Deal socialism.”

ONGOING LEGACY

After the World War II, I.G. Farben was broken up into its constituent companies and several major U.S. conglomerates, including Fritz der Meer of the I.G. managing board and Otto Ambros and Heinrich Behring, were sentenced to terms in prison for their role in enslavement and death of those victims of the Holocaust who perished at the hands of I.G. Farben. As for I.G. companies, several continue in operation. Bayer AG, the producer of “Bayer Aspirin,” is perhaps the best known of the I.G. companies remaining in operation. Bayer notes on its website that during the war, workers from occupied countries of Europe were brought to work at Bayer’s German locations but says that this was for “German industry as a whole.” Bayer also states that “anti-Semitism and other forms of virulent racism and big- ottry, wherever they appear.

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(Continued from page 13)
Spain has sometimes been slow to recognize its own treasures. Miguel de Cervantes was slipping into obscurity after his death until he was rescued by foreign critics. El Greco’s paintings were pulled from oblivion by the French.

Now, 500 years after expelling its Jews and moving to hide if not eradicate all traces of their existence, Spain has begun rediscovering the Jewish culture that thrived here for centuries and that scholars say functioned as a second Jerusalem during the Middle Ages.

“We've gone from a period of pillaging the Jews and then suppressing and ignoring their patrimony to a period of rising curiosity and fascination,” said Ana Maria Lopez, the director of the Sephardic Museum in Toledo, a hub of Jewish life before the Jews were expelled or forced to convert to Christianity in 1492 during the Inquisition.

Cities and towns across Spain are searching for the remains of medieval synagogues, including the Trassteno Synagogue from the 14th century, is something of an example. “People are trying to reproduce what has occurred in Toledo. Everyone wants their medieval synagogue.”

Toledo, with two intact medieval synagogues, including the Tránsito Synagogue from the 14th century, is something of an exception in Spain, where the expulsions of the Jews were followed by a campaign to destroy, disassemble or obscure obvious signs of their presence.

Spain had the most vibrant Jewish population in Europe before the expulsion of 1492, and it produced one of the most influential cultural legacies in Jewish history.

It was here that Hebrew was reborn as a language suitable not just for prayer and liturgy but for poetry and other secular pursuits, contributing to the advent in Spain of what has been called a golden age of Jewish literature, philosophy and science in the 10th and 11th centuries.

“In the minds of her sons and daughters, Sephardah was a second Jerusalem.” Jane S. Gerber wrote in her book “The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience.”

Expulsion from Spain, therefore, was as keenly lamented as exile from the Holy Land,” she said.

Still, despite the new enthusiasm for Spain’s Jewish heritage, intolerance toward Jews here is far from a thing of the past, the leaders say.

“People can be proud today that this synagogue has been served to build a new building for an ancient temple, and in this way, we have the opportunity to give a face to the history of Spain and its Sephardic heritage,” said the mayor of Toledo, Mr. Castaño, citing other public events.

In his address, Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves made personal donation for the project.

The synagogue’s prayer hall seats 180 people, with additional seating for up to 230 people for concerts and other public events.

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In his address, Estonian Prime Minister Andrus Ansip said: “We both, Estonians and Jews, have lived among foreign people and under foreign power, but kept our language and culture in order to mold it into statehood.”

“Spain is now opening the way for the study of that lost footprint,” he added.