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WOMEN OF VALOR

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM ANNUAL SPRING LUNCHEON
TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2008, NOON

GUEST SPEAKER DEBORAH E. LIPSTADT

Dr. Deborah E. Lipstadt is Dorot Professor of Modern Jewish and Holocaust Studies at Emory University in Atlanta, where she directs the Institute for Jewish Studies. Her book, *History on Trial: My Day in Court with David Irving* (Ecco/HarperCollins, 2005), is the story of her libel trial in London against David Irving, who sued her for calling him a Holocaust denier and right-wing extremist. The trial was described by the *Daily Telegraph* (London) as having “done for the new century what the Nuremberg tribunals or the Eichmann trial did for earlier generations.” *The Times* (London) described it as “history has had its day in court and scored a crushing victory.” The judge found David Irving to be a Holocaust denier, a falsifier of history, a racist, an anti-Semite, and a liar. Her legal battle with Irving lasted approximately five years. According to *The New York Times*, the trial “put an end to the pretense that Mr. Irving is anything but a self-promoting apologist for Hitler.” In July 2001, the Court of Appeal resoundingly rejected Irving’s attempt to appeal the judgment against him.

Her book, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (Free Press/Macmillan, 1993), is the first full-length study of those who attempt to deny the Holocaust. It was the subject of simultaneous front-page reviews in *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. The book has been published in Germany, Switzerland, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Lipstadt was an historical consultant to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and helped design the section of the Museum dedicated to the American Response to the Holocaust. She was appointed by President Clinton to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, on which she served two terms. She was a member of its Executive Committee of the Council, and chaired the Educational Committee and Academic Committee of the Holocaust Museum. Dr. Lipstadt has been called upon by members of the United States Congress to consult on political responses to Holocaust denial. From 1996 through 1999 she served as a member of the United States State Department



Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad. In this capacity she, together with a small group of leaders and scholars, advised Secretary of State Madeline Albright on matters of religious persecution abroad.

Dr. Lipstadt has also written *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust* (Free Press/Macmillan, 1986, 1993). The book, an examination of how the American press covered the news of the persecution of European Jewry between the years 1933 and 1945, addresses the question “what did the American public know and when did they know it?”

She has taught at UCLA and Occidental College in Los Angeles. She received her B.A. from City College of New York, and her M.A. and Ph.D. from Brandeis University. Professor Lipstadt is frequently called upon by the media and Jewish interests. She has appeared on CNN, CBS’s *Sixty Minutes*, NBC’s *Today Show*, ABC’s *Good Morning America*, National Public Radio’s *Fresh Air*, PBS’s *Charlie Rose Show*, and is a frequent contributor to and is widely quoted in a variety of newspapers, including the *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Atlanta Constitution*, *Baltimore*

Sun, *New York Times*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *London Times*, *London Daily Telegraph*, and *Chicago Tribune*.

She has received numerous teaching awards, including Emory’s student government association’s award for being the teacher most likely to motivate students to learn about new and unfamiliar topics, and the Emory Williams award, for her courses on modern Jewish and Holocaust studies. Given to Emory’s outstanding teachers, the award is based on nominations by alumni of the professor who has had the greatest impact on them. She has received an Honorary Doctorate from Yeshiva University, Bar Ilan University, and Baltimore Hebrew University. The *Forward* named her number-two on its list of the “Forward Fifty”: the fifty top Jewish newsmakers for the year 2000.

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May you be blessed with all that is sacred...



Happy
Passover

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS MARK KRAKOW GHETTO ANNIVERSARY

On March 16, hundreds of Jews marked the 65th anniversary of the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto with a march commemorating the German businessman whose efforts had saved Jews from the Holocaust.

Some 700 Jews from Poland, Israel and other countries marched from the site of the former ghetto to what had been a Nazi German labor camp in the suburb of *Plaszow*, many of whose inmates were employed by Oskar Schindler.

"Schindler was controversial, perhaps even a bit mad, but he was one of the few Germans who did such a thing," said 86-year-old Jan Dresner of Tel Aviv, one of some 30 marchers saved by the factory-owner.

"This is my first trip to Krakow since then, because I was afraid of those memories, but I felt it was my duty to come with my wife and daughter to tell about it."

Schindler, made famous by the 1993 Steven Spielberg film, "Schindler's List", had used his influence with fellow Nazis as well as bribes and forged documents, to save more than one thou-

sand Polish Jews.

After the occupying Germans had liquidated the ghetto in March 1943, gunning down those who resisted, they herded its survivors into the *Plaszow* labor camp.

"I saw the ghetto being liquidated," said Edward Mosberg of the U.S., now also in his 80s. "I saw hundreds of dead bodies strewn all about — it was a total cataclysm."

"I have come to bear witness to those days, because the ranks of us survivors are growing extremely thin."

Niusia Horowitz-Karakulska of Krakow was only seven when the ghetto was liquidated, but she and 15 family members owed their survival to the German entrepreneur.

"Schindler was such a warm, magnificent person, who had many

problems of his own but felt human life must be saved," Horowitz-Karakulska, 72, told Reuters.

Poland, which was invaded by Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia at the start of World War Two in September 1939, lost six million citizens in the war, half of them Jewish.

Up to 1.5 million perished at the notorious Nazi extermination camp, Auschwitz, some 25 miles west of Krakow.



Holocaust survivor Edward Mosberg talks with participants of a march marking the 65th anniversary of the liquidation of the Krakow ghetto.

ANTI-SEMITISM DOWN IN THE UNITED STATES

Anti-Semitic incidents in the United States declined for the third consecutive year, according to the Anti-Defamation League.

The ADL's annual Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents catalogued 1,357 incidents of vandalism, harassment and acts of hate against Jews in 2007 — a 13 percent drop from the 2006 total of 1,554. Anti-Semitic incidents had peaked in 2004 at 1,821 incidents.

Data in the 2007 audit, drawn from official crime statistics and information collected by the ADL's network of regional offices, include criminal and non-criminal activities.

"We are certainly encouraged that the total number of anti-Semitic incidents has declined for three years in a row," said ADL National Director Abraham Foxman. "Yet we are still troubled that there are so many incidents reported, and that these

incidents often involve expressions of anti-Jewish animus that are ugly and deeply hurtful to their victims and the communities where they occur."

Not surprisingly, the states with the highest numbers of reported incidents were the states with the highest concentrations of Jews. New York topped the list with 351 incidents, up from 284 in 2006, followed by New Jersey (144 incidents), California (186), Florida (127), Massachusetts (95), Pennsylvania (99) and Connecticut (49). Most of the reported incidents of harassment involved anti-Jewish epithets and occasionally a light assault. In one widely reported incident, a Jewish man suffered serious injuries in November when he was beaten by several assailants in the largely Orthodox enclave of Lakewood, N.J. The audit noted that acts of vandalism were mostly directed at synagogues and Jewish cemeteries, and often involved the use of swastikas.

PERMANENT OFFICES OF INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST EDUCATION GROUP TO OPEN IN BERLIN

An international coalition dedicated to the remembrance of the Holocaust has selected Berlin to serve as the site of its permanent headquarters.

Avner Shalev, the director of Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, said in Berlin that he thought it a fitting location.

"This is the place where they gathered at *Wannsee* to discuss the details of the final solution," he said, referring to Adolph Hitler's plan to eliminate Jews. "And now it will unite us all to work for a culture of remembrance."

The Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education serves as a forum to coordinate efforts to memorialize the genocide of Europe's Jewish population. Its permanent offices will share the building that houses the Topography of Terror, a Berlin museum dedicated to educating visitors about the crimes of Germany's

Nazi-era government.

Since its founding in 1998, the task force's administration has rotated annually among its 25 member countries.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who presided over a ceremony marking the announcement, said his country bore a particular and special responsibility to always remember the Holocaust against the Jews.

He said the commitment to "never again" allow another genocide must remain a central tenet of the European Union.

Shalev said the group will face more challenges in the coming years because the remaining survivors of the Holocaust are getting older.

"We need to use all pedagogical techniques at our disposal, all available media, to educate future generations," Shalev said.

BELGIUM TO PAY HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

The Belgian government and banks have agreed to pay \$170 million to Holocaust survivors, families of victims and the Jewish community for their material losses during World War II.

Campaigners welcomed the decision to compensate those whose property and goods in Belgium had been looted by Nazi occupiers. Belgium is facing 5,210 outstanding claims for restitution stemming from the Holocaust. From those, 162 amount to more than \$30,000.

Overall, \$54 million will be paid to individual claimants, with the rest going to a Jewish trust which will help the poor and keep the memory of the horrors of the Holocaust alive.

Of the 50,000 Jews who lived in Belgium in the 1930s, about half were exterminated in the Holocaust.

Last year, Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt apologized for Belgian authorities' involvement in the deportation of Jews to Nazi extermination camps.

After the Nazi invasion in May 1940, the Belgian government fled to Britain, but

issued instructions authorizing civil servants who stayed to work with the Nazis to keep services running and prevent the economic breakdown that occurred during the German occupation in WWI.

During the war, that often led to Belgian officials collaborating with the persecution of Jews, although the resistance movement was also strong in Belgium and underground networks set up to save Jews were more successful than in many other occupied nations.

"In a certain way, justice has been done. Unfortunately there are people who never came back" from the Nazi death camps, said Eli Ringer, the co-chair of the committee on the restitution of Jewish assets.

"The nice thing is that the rest of the money, about \$100 million, will go in a trust for the Jewish community in order to help needy people, in order to remember the Shoah," Ringer said. Of the total restitution payout, \$69.8 million will come from the Belgian authorities and \$85 million from banks. Most of the remainder come from insurance companies.

"BRITISH OSKAR SCHINDLER" IN RUNNING FOR NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

A British man who saved hundreds of Jewish children from Czechoslovakia from the Nazi concentration camps in the Holocaust, has been nominated for the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize.

Sir Nicholas Winton, dubbed by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair as "the British Oskar Schindler," was a young stockbroker when he pressed the London authorities into agreeing to take in the children if he could find homes for them. And he did.

The 669 youngsters were sent to foster parents — mostly in England, a small number in Sweden. In all, eight trainloads carried the mostly Jewish children from Prague through Hitler's Germany to Britain.

Winton had kept his heroic deed to himself for half a century. His pivotal role in the rescue operation was revealed in the

late 1980s, after his wife found a scrapbook documenting his work in their attic. In October 2007, 98-year-old Winton was awarded the Cross of Merit of the 1st class by Czech Defense

Minister Vlasta Parkanova for saving the children.

At the ceremony, Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg said that the Czech diplomacy decided to back schoolchildren who had collected more than 32,000 signatures in their bid to nominate Winton for the Nobel Peace Prize. He was awarded another top Czech decoration, the Tomas Garrigue Masaryk Order, in 1998.

Previous Peace Prize laureates include former prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and President

Shimon Peres for their efforts to reach a peace deal with the Palestinians; former prime minister Menachem Begin and former Egyptian president Anwar Sadat for making peace; and Jewish author and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel.



Sir Nicholas Winton

HOLOCAUST EXHIBITION ABOUT WOMEN OPENS IN GERMANY

An exhibition about how women coped in concentration camps during the Holocaust opened in March for the first time outside Israel at a museum in the eastern German city of Dresden.

"This exhibition looks at the Holocaust from a very different perspective," said Melanie Ottenbreit, a spokeswoman for the German state of Saxony which is financially supporting the show.

"It is not about the perpetrators. It doesn't look at what people did to women in the Holocaust. It presents how they coped with their situation," she said.

The exhibition's Israeli curator, Yehudit Inbar, said it was impossible to take the show out of the context of the Holocaust, but the idea was to highlight something more positive.

"Normally, when you think about the Holocaust, you think of evil and murder. But this ... has a very optimistic message," said Inbar.

The horrors endured by women in the Holocaust serve only as background information in the exhibition. Pictures, photographs, letters and artifacts describe individual stories of victims and are projected onto the museum's walls.

Some concentration camps, such as *Ravensbrueck* in northern Germany where 117,000 women and children died, contained only women. Others, including Auschwitz in Poland, were made up of compounds separated according to gender.

The exhibition shows how women, robbed of their traditional roles, had to forge new identities.

"They (the women) weren't passive. They were very, very active," said Inbar.

She described women who would struggle to observe good hygiene and try to look good when they were lined up in front of guards for selections.

"Looking good in the camps could mean life or death. These small things suddenly became very important," said Inbar.

The exhibition, in one of Dresden's main art galleries, originally opened at Jerusalem's Yad Vashem memorial to Holocaust victims last April.

More than sixty years after the end of World War Two, Germany is still struggling to deal with the legacy of the Holocaust. Berlin's main Holocaust memorial only opened in 2005, after years of delays and disagreements.

SEARCH FOR AUSTRIAN HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS GETS BOGGED DOWN

As of January, all Austrian Holocaust survivors and non-Austrian widows or widowers of survivors are eligible for special financial aid for medical needs, following the signing of a new reparations deal with Vienna. However, the group representing Austrian Jews in Israel says it is having difficulty tracking down all potential aid recipients.

In January, the Austrian Ministry of Social Affairs agreed to pay up to \$2.95 million annually to the Austrian Holocaust survivor emergency-assistance program, following negotiations with the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany — a New York-based body representing world Jewry in compensation talks. The Association of Israelis of Central European Origin, which represents the local Austrian Jewish community, subsequently launched a concentrated effort aimed at finding all of the eligible survivors.

Hanni Fruchter, who handles the association's contacts with Austrian Jews, said that they are having an especially difficult time tracking down the non-Austrian widows and widowers. "The problem is finding these people," noted Fruchter. "Their

Austrian spouses may have died a long time ago, and they themselves are neither young nor very well-connected to the Austrian community."

"This new settlement is significant, and it owes in part to a realization on the part of Austrian authorities," Gideon Taylor, the Claims Conference's executive vice president, said.

Before 2003, Austria had not agreed to any reparations, claiming it had been under Nazi occupation during World War II.

Fruchter, who immigrated from Germany many years ago, said that, in her experience, Austrian Jews are especially resentful toward their country of origin.

"For years they have seen German Jews receiving reparations, while they themselves had been denied any sort of payment because of this attitude by Vienna," she said.

Austrian Holocaust survivor Shlomo Reitman, 73, who escaped Austria with his parents when he was four years old, said he considered the settlement "the definition of too little, too late." Reitman, who is blind and eligible for the special aid, said his parents died without ever receiving any compensation for having to leave all their possessions in Austria.

RAMPANT ISLAMIC JEW-HATRED IN EUROPE

European Commissioner for Justice, Freedom, and Security, Franco Frattini, who is the European Union official responsible "for combating racism and anti-Semitism in Europe," has revealed that Muslims are responsible for fully half (50%) of the documented anti-Semitic incidents on the European continent.

Demographic data from 2007 indicate that the total number of Europeans is 494.8 million; estimates of the number of Muslims in Europe range from 15-20 million, or some ~3.0-4.0% of the total European population. Thus, on a population percentage basis, Muslims in Europe account for roughly 24.0 to 32.3 times the number of anti-Semitic incidents as their non-Muslim European counterparts.

But a much more striking and relevant

finding in light of the burgeoning Jew-hatred now evident in Europe's Muslim communities, received much less attention: in a controlled comparison to European Christians (as the "referent" group), European Muslims were nearly eightfold (i.e., 800%) more likely to be overtly anti-Semitic.

The intellectually honest assessment and understanding of Islamic anti-Semitism, and the anti-Jewish violence it begets must begin with an unapologetic analysis of the motifs of Jew-hatred contained in the foundational texts of Islam (i.e., *Koran*, *hadith*, and *sira*), while identifying those, like Sheikh Tantawi, who continue to preach and sanction this religious bigotry, regardless of their "stature."

PICTURE MAY REVEAL ANNE FRANK'S MYSTERIOUS LOVE

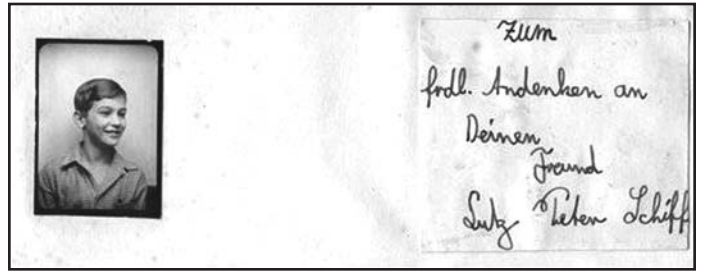
A British newspaper has published what it calls the first known photograph of a boy Anne Frank fell in love with and wrote about in her famous diary.

Anne Frank, the Jewish schoolgirl who wrote her diary while hiding from the Nazis in the Netherlands during World War II, was captivated by Peter Schiff.

She met him at school in 1940, his family also having fled from Germany to Amsterdam the previous year. At age 11, Anne fell in love with Schiff and later, while in hiding in Amsterdam herself, wrote about how much she missed him.

Her last mention of Schiff was in 1944, the year her family's safe house was raided by the German security police. She later died in a Nazi prison camp.

The Observer newspaper reported that Ernst Michaelis, 81, of London, found a photo of Schiff in a family collection after realizing that Anne Frank was writing about a boy he had known as a fellow student in Berlin.



A handout picture of Peter Schiff along with a dedication are shown at the Anne Frank House in The Hague. Anne met Peter at school in 1940 and later, while in hiding in Amsterdam, wrote about how much she missed him.

Michaelis, who moved from Germany to Britain many years ago, said he has had the photo authenticated and that it will be displayed on the Anne Frank House Web site.

Schiff also is believed to have died in a Nazi prison camp.

CANADA EXTRADITES FORMER SS PRISON GUARD SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON IN ITALY

An 83-year-old former SS prison guard Michael Siefert, who was sentenced to life in jail in Italy for Nazi war crimes, was extradited from Canada to Rome.

Siefert, known as the "Beast of Bolzano," was convicted in absentia in 2000 by a military tribunal in Verona on nine counts of murder, committed while he was an SS guard at a prison transit camp in Bolzano, northern Italy.

At his trial, people testified that Siefert starved a 15-year-old prisoner to death, gouged out a person's eyes and tortured a woman before killing her and her daughter.

Siefert, a Canadian citizen of Ukrainian origin, has acknowledged being a guard at the SS-run camp but denies being involved in atrocities.

In 1944 and 1945, the Bolzano camp served as a transit point for Jews, Italian resistance fighters, Italians drafted for factory work and German army deserters who were being shipped north.

Siefert, who has lived in Canada since 1951, unsuccessfully fought efforts by the Canadian government to strip him of his citizenship based on allegations that he hid his past when he entered the country.

In January, Siefert lost a bid to have the Supreme Court of Canada consider his appeal seeking to stop his extradition to Italy, clearing the way for his deportation. Avi Benlolo, president of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies in Canada, said Siefert needs to face justice in Italy.

"It's critical that this happens," Benlolo said. "It sets an example for other war criminals, not only Nazi war criminals, but war criminals related to Rwanda, Bosnia, Darfur or any other genocide, that there's no time limit to justice."

The Italian prosecutor, Costantini, said he planned to question Siefert as a witness to atrocities committed by other guards at the camp.

YAD VASHEM MOURNS THE PASSING OF SAM SKURA

I would like to share some thoughts with you about the essence of my friendship with Sam Skura and about his lifelong achievements.

Friendships formed after the Holocaust were different than most conventional friendships. They were far more intense, more lasting and more meaningful. Because the *Shoah* robbed us of our families, our homes and everything near and dear, we needed to recreate a world we could trust and we could believe in. We needed to find friends who understood our plight and who would give us the strength to move on with our lives. How fortunate I was to find such a friend!

For sixty years, starting in the DP Camp *Feldafing*, Sam Skura was my best friend, and my most trusted colleague. Not only were we best friends, our wives were best friends. Stella and my late wife Diana were soul-mates who spoke to each other almost daily. Over a period of six decades we shared each others *simchas*: births, bar and bat-mitzvahs and weddings. The highlight of any given week was an evening out with the Skuras and some of our other close survivor friends. When I say that we all spoke the same language, I don't refer to Yiddish, English or Polish, but to the language of



the heart and to the language of unspoken words that comes from decades of shared experiences.

In 1970, when I founded the first umbrella organization for survivors, Sam Skura was at my side and served as vice-president. In 1981, the Skuras hosted a small parlor meeting in their home in the presence of Dr. Yitzhak Arad, the former Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate. This meeting inaugurated the American Society for Yad Vashem. In all these endeavors, Sam Skura was always the first person I called. He listened, he was supportive, he offered opinions and he gave advice. When I got

off the phone, I felt fortified and energized. Sam was truly a life-giving person. He served Society for 26 years as Vice-Chairman.

The years we worked together on behalf of Yad Vashem were rich, rewarding, and fruitful.

Sam and Stella's devotion to Yad Vashem is visible throughout the Yad Vashem landscape. Together with Marvin and Celina Zborowski, they donated the Yad Vashem Candelabra, the symbol of Yad Vashem. Sam chaired the fundraising campaign that enabled the erection of the Monument to the Jewish Fighters, Partisans and Soldiers.

The Skuras are Benefactors of the Valley of Communities and were the first Benefactors of Project 2001. The Learning Center, which is an integral part of the new museum complex, was established through their generosity.

Sam was a devoted husband, a loving father and a dotting grandfather. He and Stella passed along the legacy and lessons of the Holocaust to their daughter Cheryl and to their grandchildren, Iris and Ilana. I am pleased and proud of Cheryl's distinguished service to our organization. I recall when Cheryl and her late husband Mochi were honored at our Annual

Dinner, Cheryl opened her remarks to the thousand guests who gathered for the event with a Yiddish phrase: "*Ich bin ale-mens tochter*." "I am everybody's daughter." And indeed, that is exactly how we survivors felt about each other and about each other's children — like one big family.

Today we mourn the loss of Sam Skura, an irreplaceable member of the survivor family. His passing creates a void for Yad Vashem as well as for the officers, the board and staff of the American Society for Yad Vashem. Personally, I have lost a dear and valued friend. The Skura family has lost their champion.

Stella, Cheryl, Iris, Adam, Ilana and the entire family: May Sam's memory and his many tangible achievements always be a blessing. And may the sympathy of friends who care bring you comfort.

The great theologian, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said, "Death is the end of doing, not the end of being." Sam Skura will live on through his descendants, through his deeds and through his common destiny with the Jewish people.

Eulogy delivered by Eli Zborowski, Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem and lifelong friend of Sam Skura, on February 22, 2008



BOOK REVIEWS

U.S. INTELLIGENCE AND THE NAZIS

U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis. By Richard Breitman, Norman J.W. Goda, Timothy Naftali, and Robert Wolfe. Cambridge University Press: New York, 2005. 495 pp. \$26.99.

REVIEWED BY DR. DIANE CYPKIN

In 1998 Congress passed the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act. This law obliged the CIA, the U.S. Army and the FBI to declassify operational information on their recruitment among Nazi and collaborationist veterans in the early Cold War. It also created a new organization, the Nazi War Criminal and Imperial Japanese Records Interagency Work Group (IWG), to implement and oversee a declassification effort that turned out to be the largest targeted declassification in American history."

The above noted is a part of the introduction to the outstanding volume entitled *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis*. Hired as "historical consultants" by the IWG, the authors "looked closely at hundreds of thousands of pages of [these] recently opened records." They synthesized them with other materials – some also recently come to light and others already known – to create here a work thick with information. For the book is, in fact, about Nazi recruitment and more. Indeed, each chapter in this work – whether by one author or sometimes by more – is about a different aspect of the Holocaust, U.S. Intelligence, and the Nazis.

Thus, the first chapter entitled "OSS Knowledge of the Holocaust," by Richard

Breitman with Norman J.W. Goda, deals with a question many continue to ponder: When did the United States learn that Jews in Europe were being exterminated? Interestingly, many who worked for the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) still claim the agency knew about camps, but not extermination camps. There was information coming to America, by way of the British, that things were not good for the Jews in Europe. Refugees told stories. Correspondents wrote. But confirmation and especially interest was late in coming. America needed information about the Dora concentration camp because V-2 rockets were being assembled there. That information was of strategic value. Otherwise, the goal was winning the war.

In another chapter entitled, "Banking on Hitler: Chase National Bank and the Rückwanderer Mark Scheme, 1936-1941," by Norman J.W. Goda, "declassified FBI records" have revealed how Chase National Bank helped Germany earn dollars selling "Rückwanderer (returnee) marks – to U.S. residents of German descent." Germans who were thinking of returning to the Fatherland or who "simply wished to purchase goods there" were interested. Germany needed

the dollars and Chase National enjoyed the commissions. Finally, in the '40s, the *Rückwanderer* case went to trial. Interestingly, Chase National never suffered any legal rebuke for this. A good lawyer would make all the difference.

After the war, in the chapter entitled "Nazi Collaborators in the United States: What the FBI Knew," by Norman J.W. Goda, we find out the FBI knew much . . . but because it felt that former Nazis, now so-called émigrés, might be useful against creeping communism in the U.S., they kept quiet. Such, surely was the case of Viorel Trifa who, in America, eventually became Bishop Valerian. During World War II, Trifa was "a leading member of the Fascist, anti-Semitic Iron Guard" in Romania. Specifically, he had had control over all the uni-

versity student groups, and on the night of January 20, 1941, helped cause a pogrom which, among other things, resulted in the death of many "Jews . . . their shops destroyed and their synagogues burned." Nonetheless, in 1950 he arrived in the United States as a displaced person, went on to Cleveland, and eventually became an important leader in the Romanian Orthodox Church. The FBI began to

uncover his true identity but did nothing about him. In fact, they protected him!! Why? As Goda puts it, he was thought to be an "important anti-Communist figure in [his] community." In the end, though, because of what people knew, he was "obliged to leave the country and renounce [his] U.S. citizenship in 1984"—never proving of any value to the FBI . . .

In the chapter entitled "The CIA and Eichmann's Associates," by Timothy Naftali, we see how the CIA tried to use former Nazis. Thus, for example, we are told about Erich Rajakowitsch. During the war "he worked with Eichmann." Later, as regards Holland, "he participated in organizing the deportation of 80 percent of that country's Jews to the death camps." After the war he was in Italy, running an import-export firm. The CIA, that really never checked his files, wanted him to work for them, specifically because of his contacts with East Germans and the Communist Chinese. And they still wanted him to work for them, even after his trial in Austria for some of what he did during the war. So, what did the CIA get from him? Probably, not very much . . . but not for lack of trying.

Needless to say, this reviewer has noted here but brief snapshots of chapters – 15 in all – that have a great deal to offer the serious Holocaust reader *vis-à-vis* U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis. The book is heartily recommended to them. This is a volume which is an eye-opener, to say the least.

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

AN ENTIRE LIFE

An Entire Life. By Aharon Appelfeld. Keter: Jerusalem, 2007. 253 pp.

REVIEWED BY RABBI ISRAEL ZOBERMAN

The world's most prolific Holocaust author, survivor Aharon Appelfeld, admirably continues to salvage from the Shoa's vast darkness of evil nuggets of reassuring light. In this latest novel, *An Entire Life*, he focuses on the double torments of an Austrian child of a mixed marriage whose mother, a Jewish convert to Christianity, was taken away.

Thirteen-year-old Helga, whose life turns into a whirlwind, painfully discovers her own Jewish background even as her mother Gizla, along with many in her generation tried, unsuccessfully, to abandon their handicapping Jewish faith. Helga refuses to

accept her beloved mother's lot and at risk to her own life embarks on a trying journey to find her and find herself. While she would never see her mother again, though ultimately learning of her death, she comes closer and closer to her both in reality and dream. Helga's father, Zigmund, a farm owner and a decorated former army officer, marries a Christian woman following his wife's disappearance. Not all the Gentiles are vil-

lains for the author, and some stand out for their outstanding attributes.

Helga learns first-hand the cruelty of rejection by classmates and her own aunt Brumhilda who begrudges her brother's marriage to a Jewish woman. Helga's saving grace is reserved for a selfless nun who reaches out to embrace one who chose to identify with a vulnerable people.

She directs her toward an endangered Judaism from without and within which Helga knows so little about. Helga ends up aiding and healing survivors of the camps, and with some of them she would travel to Palestine's beckoning shores for more healing and challenge.

Appelfeld's powerful terse style, in which every word counts, is truly a magnet drawing the reader deeper and deeper into a thick forest rich in meaning, suffer-

ing and courage. The original Hebrew title, Chayim Shlemiym (A full or whole life) intimates more aptly than the given English title, *An Entire Life*, both the brokenness of the portrayed lives and their times as well as the human drive toward wholeness and redemption.

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



KILLING AFTER THE KILLING

Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz. By Jan T. Gross. Random House, 2006. 304 pp. \$25.95.

REVIEWED BY ELIE WIESEL

In 1996, Poland's Prime Minister, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, invited a Jewish American writer to speak at a commemoration marking the 50th anniversary of the *Kielce* pogrom. The speaker reminded his listeners that if Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek and Sobibor were German initiatives, the killers this time on the ground were Polish, their language Polish and their hatred entirely Polish. He took advantage of the occasion to demand that the Polish government remove the crosses and other religious symbols that, by chance, he had seen a few years before strewn in the ashes at Birkenau, where almost all the burned dead had been

Jews. The next day, virulent, deplorable — essentially anti-Semitic — attacks appeared throughout the Polish press.

I was that speaker.

Some time later, the great Israeli historian Israel Gutman spoke to me briefly about the *Jedwabne* pogrom, in which virtually all of that small Polish town's 1,600 Jewish residents were killed in a single day in July 1941, and a new and important book, *Neighbors*, by Jan T. Gross, whose

revelations about *Jedwabne* promised to embarrass Poland and jolt the conscience of the world.

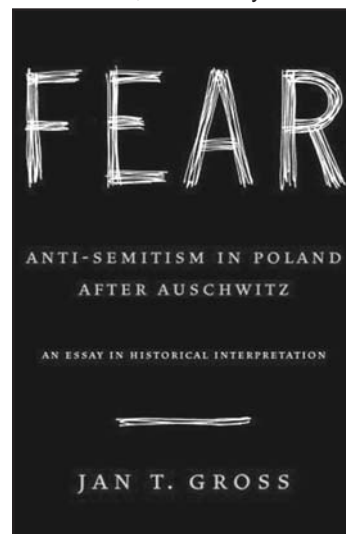
A professor at Princeton now, Gross is a Polish Jew who knows his subject. *Neighbors* — a book of high moral quality — described the massacre of Jews at Jedwabne as not carried out by Germans but by native Poles. Published in English in 2001, it had formidable impact in America and elsewhere.

One can easily predict a similar effect and success for his new work, *Fear*. You read it breathlessly, all human reason telling you it can't be so — and the book culminates in so keen a shock that even a close student of the Jewish tragedy during World War II cannot fail to feel it.

Bitterness, envy, murderous rage: Everything that is low, primitive, vile and ugly in the human

animal is laid bare and analyzed on these pages. Reading this book — repugnant and revolting as it can be — one is seized by an impulse to close it and say: No. It is not possible for so many human beings to have loosed their savage hounds on fellow human beings — men, women, children, all of them innocent and defenseless in a place that was just waking from a long nightmare.

(Continued on page 14)



ZIONISM IN THE HOLOCAUST: LODZ GHETTO JEW DREAMS OF STATEHOOD

BY ELI ASHKENAZI, HAARETZ

"A Jewish nation is something the world needs, and that is the reason it will be formed. If only one man thought so, one could call it an insane notion, but the idea of a Jewish state is certainly acceptable and feasible. It will become reality without special difficulty. In the Jewish state, the young generation will discover a future of light, freedom and dignity."

This passage appears in a previously unreleased document from the Lodz Ghetto in 1941 outlining the formation of a future Jewish state. The document, which predates Israel's Declaration of Independence by seven years, will soon be shown to the public at the *Kibbutz Lohamei HaGetaot* museum in the western Galilee.

The author is anonymous, but the Polish-language declaration is written on the official stationery of the *Lodz Ghetto Judenrat*, the Jewish administrative body. Signed at the bottom is Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski, head of the *Lodz Ghetto Judenrat*. The document is dated May 18 and 19, 1941.

"We will form a single legion based on the example of the French *Legion d'honneur* and we will name it Jewish Honor. Its symbol will be a yellow ribbon, thus trans-

forming the symbol of our shame to our new emblem of newfound pride," reads the ninth and final clause in the three-page document. The museum announced the document yesterday, International Holocaust Memorial Day.

According to the museum's director general, Simcha Stein, the handwritten document includes detailed plans for the formation of a Jewish state. Stein says it also lists the reasons such a state was needed and names the bodies responsible for its establishment. It also contains suggested sanctions for people who violate the state's basic laws.

The declaration was written on the back of papers that listed the people eligible to receive clothes and food, alongside people who were taken off that list. Being on the list could make all the difference between life and death at the *Lodz Ghetto*, which was the second largest ghetto after the Warsaw Ghetto for Jews and Roma in German-occupied Poland.

About 200,000 people vied for survival on the ghetto's area of four square kilometers. Some 43,500 of them died of starvation, hypothermia and disease. Anyone who approached the ghetto's walls risked being shot by the Nazi German guards.

Originally intended as a temporary gathering point for Jews, the ghetto became an industrial center of sorts, providing supplies for Nazi Germany. Its remarkable

productivity allowed the ghetto to survive until August 1944.

The ghetto became the last ghetto in Poland to be liquidated when its remaining prisoners were transported to Auschwitz, along with Rumkowski and his family. They were eventually deported to Auschwitz, where they died on August 28, 1944.

"Even if we have long, aquiline noses in our promised land, even if we grow black or red beards and walk on crooked legs, we shall not be the object of ridicule and scorn," the document reads. "At last, we will live there as free men and women, and we would die in our homeland in peace. There we will receive recognition for our tremendous achievements."

The declaration, which the museum's archive manager Yossi Shavit says might have been a draft, goes on to say: "We will live there with the consent of the world at large. Our emancipation will in turn serve to emancipate the world. Our richness will enrich the world, and our greatness will lend itself to the world. The word *zyd* [*zhid*], which was used as an insulting and humiliating term, will become a source of pride, as other people pride themselves in being called German, English or French."

Shavit says that any piece of paper in the *Lodz Ghetto* was a valuable possession, let alone the list that appeared on

the other side of the "declaration of independence." Paper, he said, was valuable for heating, padding, insulation and shoes.

The writing style makes Shavit suspect that the author was Oskar Singer, who often wrote during his stay at the *Lodz Ghetto*. Some of his signed works can be found in the records of the museum, The Ghetto Fighters' House – Itzhak Katzenelson Holocaust and Jewish Resistance Heritage Museum.

Oskar Singer died after the ghetto was liquidated.

"This is a man of extraordinary stature and vision. I would call him a second Herzl," says Shavit. "He had to struggle to survive by then. Food was scarce, and everyone was trying to get their hands on a crumb of bread, or a piece of wood for fire to keep warm. And here this man was able to retain his humanity, create and think clearly."

Stein, the museum's director, says what impressed him most about the document was that as the Jewish people of Poland and Europe were being rounded up and murdered en masse, "there were still those who believed in the triumph of the Jewish people in their own land. Releasing this hopeful and optimistic document on the 60th year of Israel's existence carries a special significance."

BY MAKING HOLOCAUST PERSONAL TO PUPILS, SARKOZY STIRS ANGER

BY ELAINE SCIOLINO,
THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Nicolas Sarkozy dropped an intellectual bombshell, surprising the nation and touching off waves of protest with his revision of the school curriculum: beginning next fall, he said, every fifth grader will have to learn the life story of one of the 11,000 French children killed by the Nazis in the Holocaust.

"Nothing is more moving, for a child, than the story of a child his own age, who has the same games, the same joys and the same hopes as he, but who, in the dawn of the 1940s, had the bad fortune to be defined as a Jew," Mr. Sarkozy said at the end of a dinner speech to France's Jewish community. He added that every French child should be "entrusted with the memory of a French child-victim of the Holocaust."

Adding to the national fracas over the announcement, Mr. Sarkozy wrapped his plan in the cloak of religion, placing blame for the wars and violence of the last century on an "absence of God" and calling the Nazi belief in a hierarchy of races "radically incompatible with Judeo-Christian monotheism."

Education Minister Xavier Darcos explained later that the aim of the plan was to "create an identification between a child of today and one of the same age who was deported and gassed."

The Holocaust is already taught in French schools, but some psychiatrists and educators predicted that requiring

students to identify with a specific victim would traumatize them.

Political opponents dismissed the plan as his latest misguided idea, unveiled without reflection or consultation. Some

a dead child. The weight of this memory is much too heavy to bear."

Ms. Veil was in the audience when Mr. Sarkozy spoke, and said that when she heard his words, "My blood turned to ice."

But Serge Klarsfeld, a Jewish historian who has devoted his life to recording the list and biographies of France's Holocaust victims, praised the president for his "courage."

"This is the crowning glory of long and arduous work," he said. "To those who say it's too difficult for young children — that's not true. What they see on television or in a horror film is much worse. This is not a morbid mission."

Mr. Klarsfeld likened the plan to a practice by the United States Holocaust Memorial

Museum in Washington, D.C., which gives visitors small booklets describing the experiences of Holocaust victims and survivors.

On one level, Mr. Sarkozy's plan is a logical extension of his sometimes sentimental and pedagogical approach to governing. Last year, he enraged politicians on the left, the biggest union for high school teachers and some historians and teachers when he ordered all high schools in France to read a handwritten letter of a 17-year-old student who was executed by the Nazis for his resistance activities.

On another level, it reflects his oft-stated declaration that as president, he is also a "friend" as he calls himself, of Israel. By extension, he is also a friend of France's

Jews. He is, for example, the first French president to address the annual dinner of France's Jewish community.

Teachers defended the current approach to the Holocaust in French schools. Since 2002, fifth-graders have studied the Nazis' systematic destruction of six million Jews as a crime against humanity.

Older children watch films on the Holocaust, visit Holocaust museums and memorials and take field trips to concentration camps. Schools where students were taken away for deportation hang plaques in their memory.

"The Holocaust has to be put in the context of the rise of the Nazis and the war, not just emotion and dramatic spectacle," said Gilles Moindrot, secretary-general of the largest union for primary school teachers. "If you do this with the memory of individual Jews, you'd have to do it with the victims of slavery or the wars of religion. We can't have this approach."

Mr. Sarkozy's advisers acknowledged that he came up with his Holocaust plan for schoolchildren without any formal consultation. In the face of the criticism, however, Mr. Sarkozy vowed to proceed.

"It is ignorance — not knowledge — that leads to the repetition of abominable situations," he said during a visit to *Périgueux* in central France, adding, "You do not traumatize children by giving them the gift of the memory of a country."

Editorial note: A week after the Sarkozy's proposal France has quietly dropped it. The government has appointed a committee to study how to improve Holocaust education in France, where the history of the Nazi murder of European Jews is studied, but does not include each pupil learning about an individual victim.



President Nicolas Sarkozy in *Périgueux*, France, where he promoted a curriculum based on young victims of the Nazis.

historians argued that the focus on victims could steer attention away from the Vichy government's collaboration with the Nazis. Still others warned that the plan could backfire, creating resentment among France's ethnic Arab and African populations if they felt their own histories were getting short shrift.

The initiative has also pitted some Jews against one another. "It is unimaginable, unbearable, tragic and above all, unjust," Simone Veil, a Holocaust survivor and honorary president of the Foundation for the Memory of the Holocaust, told the Web site of the magazine *L'Express*. "You cannot inflict this on little ones of 10 years old! You cannot ask a child to identify with

SURVIVORS' CORNER

"DEADLY MEDICINE" OF HOLOCAUST

BY ALLEN COSTANTINI, KARE 11 NEWS

A visitor wonders how Margot DeWilde can sit so comfortably in her Plymouth home as she tries to explain her place in the greatest horror story of the 20th century.

"When we were there, a group of young men came and tattooed the numbers on our arms," she says, pushing up the light material of her sleeve. The somewhat softened numbers of old ink are blue beneath her pale skin. "People became a number and not a person anymore." The ugly marks of Auschwitz have been seen before on other arms of other Holocaust survivors, but it is not so much what was put on the now 87 year old as what was taken away. Margot was sterilized.

"I'm a fatalist," she sighs. "It happened. I always wanted 6 kids. So, now I had to do with doggies."

Margot hasn't lost her sense of humor, even though her Nazi captors lost their sense of decency. What then 21-year-old Margot Meyer did lose was the chance to bear children.

Margot and her husband, Lodewyk Meyer, were tricked into boarding a train from Holland in 1943. They thought they were going to Switzerland and safety. Margot had made false identification papers for them and her parents without the tell-tale "J" that identified them as Jews.

When the train passed into Germany, stopping at *Cologne*, they were instructed

to disembark and go to the Swiss Consulate to obtain visas. In fact, they were arrested and thrown into "Gestapo prison." Thus, began the terrible trek that landed them at the most infamous of all the Nazi death camps.

Margot remembers the handsome German SS officer standing at the end of the Auschwitz train platform. He would take a prominent place in the pantheon of history's worst war criminals. Dr. Josef Mengele supervised the medical experiments performed on helpless men, women and children.

"He ordered young, married women to step forward, which I did," says Margot.

It was the second to last time she would ever see Lodewyk. "I don't remember having said 'goodbye' to my husband or whatever, nothing. You had to step forward, so you were taken away in a truck to a building what was not the crematorium, we learned later, but it was a big shower building." It was the beginning of the end for Margot's dream of her own family. Dr. Susan Bachrach, Curator of Special Exhibitions at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. explains, "There was an attempt to come up with a more efficient way of sterilizing people."

"After World War II," Bachrach notes, "there was definitely a whitewash of these scientific and medical professions." The exhibit, entitled "*Deadly Medicine*," documents how doctors, nurses and scientists actively implemented the Nazi's attempt to create a "master race" by elim-



Margot DeWilde, victim of the "*Deadly medicine*."

inating anyone they considered lesser or "defective" humans. Children and adults were treated as lab rats by Mengele and his cohorts. They were often then murdered to facilitate post-mortem examinations of their experiments' effects. The doctors' actions led to the post-war "coverup" noted by Bachrach.

"There was a claim that they had been co-opted by the Nazi regime, that they didn't willingly collaborate with the regime and this exhibit shows that that wasn't the case," says Bachrach.

Among the experiments at Auschwitz was the sterilization of men and women as efficiently as possible. "And the whole

idea," Bachrach says, "is that you could breed better human beings."

The Nazi propaganda films made claims that we now regard as ridiculous. One in the "*Deadly Medicine*" exhibit is translated from German as "The Jewish people represent an especially high percentage of the mentally ill." The video goes on to assert "The prevention of genetically-burdened offspring is a moral commandment."

Under such mandates, German soldiers and their collaborators seized European Jews, including Margot and Lodewyk. They were sent to camps like Auschwitz for experimentation, sterilization and, for six million, extermination.

Margot catches her breath, remembering that Lodewyk was just 23 years old. She has a picture of a happy couple, picnicking at a relative's summer home, in happier times. Their smiles give no hint of the horror to come so quickly.

By some chance, Lodewyk ended up in a barracks next to Margot's at Auschwitz. She was able to see him once through a crack in the boards of her barracks' wall. He had been propped up in a window by a male nurse.

"I saw a poor soul with big ears and no hair and big face and nothing else. I could send him my solid food once in a while, because I could "organize" (steal) extra portions of soup," recalls Margot. She received word that her husband was dead of sickness. She doesn't believe it. "He passed away of, I got to say something" (Continued on page 15)

HIDDEN STORY OF BAD AROLSEN

BY TOBY AXELROD, JTA

While Holocaust museums in Jerusalem and Washington this month unveiled access to digitized parts of the massive archive in *Bad Arolsen*, some relatives traveled to the German town to recover their loved ones' personal effects.

On index cards, letters and crumbling ledgers, a numbing 17.5 million names of those trapped in the Nazi camps and ghettos are held on rows of shelves.

The numbness cracks the moment a visitor shakes open a small brown envelope and the photos spill out: a wedding, a picnic, a passport. Out tumbles a ring from one envelope; an ID with a thumbprint falls out of another.

Since the end of World War II, some 2,300 such envelopes have been sitting at the International Tracing Service archive here gathering dust. They hold rare personal effects among millions of documents stored here. While Holocaust museums in Jerusalem and Washington in January unveiled access to digitized documents from the massive *Bad Arolsen* archive, some of those rare personal effects are being reunited with relatives of their owners.

Sixty-three years ago, arriving prisoners at the *Neuengamme* concentration camp near Hamburg deposited valuables in an envelope that was then inscribed with their contact information, as if the items

would be returned. About half the 106,000 prisoners held in *Neuengamme* from 1938 to 1945 died.

At the end of January, the children and grandchildren of eight men who died at the camp arrived at *Bad Arolsen* from a small town in the Netherlands, *Putten*,



Maria Raabe, a spokeswoman for the *Bad Arolsen* archive, in front of some of the millions of postwar cards tracking the passage of individuals through Nazi camps or ghettos.

and each family received an envelope.

Some had only an identification card inside, while others had photos. For some the envelopes contained the only belongings the descendants ever recovered from their lost relative.

One man, born a few months after his father was deported, had never before seen a photo of him.

"The German staff was crying together with the Dutch people," said Pieter Decker, a

member of the group from *Putten*.

Until recently, the *Bad Arolsen* archive was used solely to assist survivors or heirs to determine eligibility for compensation, or to help them find lost relatives. Inquiries have been made regarding nearly 3 million names.

For decades, historians had fought for access to the archive while *Bad Arolsen* digitized its documents.

Last year, the 11-member international commission that controls the tracing service finally agreed to grant that access. As it is digitized, the archival material is being released — documents relating to wartime incarceration and concentration camps — to museums in the 11 member nations.

All the documents, including material relating to forced labor and postwar documentation, should be digitized and available to the museums by 2010.

In the middle of January, Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial was the first to establish a service for processing requests for information. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington unveiled its service a week later.

The archives' Web site, www.its-arolsen.org, "provides access to regulations and the possibility for online

requests for historical research," said Reto Meister, the director of the International Tracing Service.

Most of the material consists of forms the Nazis filled out as the people were deported from one concentration camp to another. Allied forces confiscated these records and created an archive to assist in tracing missing persons.

Prisoners' arrival dates are noted. The lack of a departure date is a euphemism for death.

"Every page, every name is a life story," said Maria Raabe, an archive spokeswoman. But "for a large number of people, we don't know what happened to them."

With all the attention to detail, why were the 2,300 envelopes containing personal effects never returned to the people whose names and addresses were printed on them?

In part, the problem was time. For decades the archive had been helping survivors qualify for compensation or find lost relatives, and the addresses on the envelopes were old, Raabe said. If one of the 2,300 names on the envelopes were mentioned in a query letter — a rare occurrence — the items were returned.

The most dramatic such case took place in September, when members of *Foundation October44*, which honors the memory of men deported from the town of *Putten* after Resistance fighters captured a *Wehrmacht* soldier, visited the newly opened archive.

(Continued on page 15)

GERMAN STUDENTS CONFRONT THE HOLOCAUST

BY JOSEPH BERGER,
THE NEW YORK TIMES

There are probably few places in this country where lessons on the Holocaust touch as exposed a nerve as they do at the German School here.

Not many people in its Westchester backyard know about the German School, which serves children of Germans and other German speakers posted in this country by companies like Lufthansa or Mercedes-Benz.

Most of the 375 students know in their marrow that grandparents and great-grandparents were German citizens when six million Jews were murdered. But they do not want to go through life ashamed of being German.

"It's something we always have to deal with, that our country did something like that," said Julia Vogt, a 10th grader. "I feel proud to be German, but we can't say it that way because of what happened."

So the arrival last month of a traveling exhibit on Anne Frank's life and accompanying programs, all sponsored by the school and by Westchester's Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center, in Purchase, was a moment that required finesse on everybody's part.

"The kids are not responsible, but it's their legacy, so how to do it in a way that it's not shoved down their throats so they don't feel guilty," is the way the challenge was stated by Donna Cohen, the center's

executive director.

German School students and visitors like those from Rye Country Day School were touched by photographs of Frank before she went into hiding, including one of her poised on a beach with her sister Margot. Such commonplace experiences made it all the more shattering for the students to learn she died of typhus in Bergen-Belsen when she was 15.

The students were also spellbound by a talk given by Selmar Hubert, 82, of Rye Brook, who described the brutality he experienced growing up in the 1930s in the Bavarian village of *Cronheim*. He told of the day his schoolmates pounced on him and his sister, cursing and spitting at them, while the teacher, a Nazi, egged them on. The school forced him to shout slogans like "Kill all Jews."

"Imagine what it feels like to shout 'Kill all Jews' when you're Jewish," Mr. Hubert said.

Mr. Hubert held the students riveted, like a counselor telling a ghost story around a campfire. On *Kristallnacht* in 1938, Nazi vandals ransacked his home; his father

was taken to Dachau, then released as inexplicably as he had been arrested.

Finally, his father put the boy — just 13 — on a train that would take him to England in the *Kindertransport* program that saved 10,000 Jewish children.

"I looked in his eye and he looked in mine and we both knew we would never see each other again," Mr. Hubert said. In fact, they did not.

But Mr. Hubert also wanted students to know about the English people who safeguarded him and his sister and about his return

seven years ago to *Cronheim*, where he was warmly greeted by children from the very village that had once scorned him.

He echoed Anne Frank.

"You have to have faith in the goodness of people," Mr. Hubert said. "I would not be sitting here if not for that."

The program set off a tumult of feelings in the students. They told of American youngsters who ask them, when they identify themselves as German, "Isn't that the country Hitler was from?"

"I had nothing to do with it, my parents had nothing to do with it, so it's unfair that

we have to hear these remarks," said Hanna Streck.

But Julia Litzkow countered: "It's not a burden. It's a responsibility. We can't deny it happened. But we have to make sure it doesn't happen again."

Udo Bochsinger, the headmaster, said that some restless students have complained, "Why can't we stop talking about the Holocaust?" His response is to find more arresting ways of imparting the story, including discussions of contemporary failures to stop genocide in Rwanda and Darfur. It is important to note, he suggests, that even today, people are acquiescing to mass slaughter.

Still, Günter Zloch, a history teacher, pointed out that Germany's genocide was unique in its bureaucratic, industrial thoroughness. "Everyone has the potential to become this evil, so it's not history for me," Mr. Zloch said.

That's why Lukas Litzkow, Julia's twin, was pleased that the exhibit highlighted the story of Mies Giep, a Gentile who helped hide the Franks while they were in hiding in Amsterdam.

"It shows that not all people were Nazis, that there were people who stood up and said this was wrong," he said.

Mr. Hubert like to tells young Germans troubled by guilt over atrocities they did not perpetrate that he suffers from survivors' guilt. "Neither your feelings nor my feelings make any sense," he will say. "How can we overcome that guilt? That's one of the things we do here — help each other."

MUSEUM WILL EMPHASIZE RICH HISTORY OF POLISH JEWS

PETER O'NEIL, CANADA.COM

Stone-faced tourists spill into this city by the thousands each day to retrace grim Holocaust history, from Jew-saving hero Oskar Schindler's famous enamelware plant to the Nazi death factory in nearby Auschwitz-Birkenau.

But some want the visitors to focus a little less on Hitler's Final Solution and more on Poland's rich Jewish history and culture that spanned almost 1,000 years.

The pre-war presence of more than three million Polish Jews was vanquished due to the Nazi genocide, post-war pogroms and a 1968 communist purge that killed or drove out all but a few thousand.

"We have tens of thousands of young people coming not only from Israel, but from all over the world, each year to visit death camps," said Agnieszka Rudzinska, development director of Warsaw's proposed \$60 million Museum of the History of Polish Jews. "It's important to give them context. Those who perished in the Holocaust deserve, and we owe this to them, to be seen not just as victims. They were creators."

The facility is also needed to counter Polish anti-Semitism that is so mainstream that Poland's governing Law and Justice party is politically allied with the *Radio Maryja* station, which has been denounced by the Vatican and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance because of its anti-Semitic broadcasts.

"This is the best activity to fight Polish anti-Semitism," Rudzinska said.

The museum, which has raised roughly half the funds it needs to open by 2010, is being applauded in Krakow by a Roman Catholic-raised Pole who since 1988 has run an annual festival celebrating Jewish

culture. The project began small but is now a major international event each summer.

Janusz Makuch said the Holocaust hangs over his festival as a reminder that it wouldn't have been necessary had Poland's Jews not been so brutally wiped out.

"But my God. The Holocaust lasted six years. The Jewish life in this country lasted 1,000 years. I'm most interested in how the Jews lived and how they created the culture."

Jews began arriving here after the founding of the Kingdom of Poland in the 11th century.

They were invited to form a professional middle class between the aristocracy and the peasants.

Poland later became known as a "Jewish paradise" during the period of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that began in the mid-16th century.

Life got tougher at various times for Jews from the 17th century onwards due to both domestic pogroms and the intolerance of foreign occupiers such as Russia and Germany, finally culminating in the Nazi extermination program.

The Warsaw museum, strangely enough, might have never gotten off the ground without the help of Polish President Lech Kaczynski.

Museum director Rudzinska said Kaczynski offered the museum critical financial support from the city at a point when the project might have been abandoned.

Israeli high school principal Menachem Shelef, who was showing his 35 students around Warsaw's *Nozyk Synagogue* one October afternoon, said there is a cruel irony to the museum's launch.

"They are constructing this place because there are no Jews in Poland," said Shelef, who lost most of his Polish family in the Holocaust. "But it's important because at least it's going to show something about Jews in Poland, their life and culture."



Selmar Hubert discusses being a Jewish boy in '30s Germany.

PORTUGAL HONORS DIPLOMAT WHO SAVED JEWS

Country rights long-standing wrong by launching virtual museum in honor of diplomat who helped save thousands of Jews during World War II and was consequently fired in disgrace by government.

Parliament Speaker Jaime Gama presided at the official launch of a website chronicling the life and work of Aristides de Sousa Mendes, a career diplomat who died in poverty and obscurity more than 50 years ago.

Sousa Mendes was the Portuguese consul general in *Bordeaux*, France, when the Germans invaded that country in 1940. Defying his government's instructions, he issued visas to an estimated 10,000 Jews and 20,000 other people fleeing the Nazi advance.

For many, the only way out was through Lisbon, Portugal's Atlantic coast capital, and a Portuguese transit visa was needed to leave France and cross Spain. Sousa Mendes and a handful of staff worked furiously to issue visas to thousands who queued around the consulate for days.

"I'd rather be with God against man than with man against God," Sousa Mendes said later.

But his actions got him recalled to Lisbon, where then-dictator Antonio Salazar fired him from Portugal's diplomatic service. Shunned socially, denied a pension and barred from practicing law, he lived out his life in poverty with his wife and 14 children. He died in 1954.

Salazar's dictatorship fell in a 1974 army coup, but Sousa Mendes was largely forgotten until 1988, when the country's political parties voted unanimously to make amends.

Parliament approved a bill that posthumously reinstated him as a diplomat, promoted him to the rank of ambassador and paid compensation to his surviving relatives, who used the money to repurchase the family house. They are trying to raise money to turn it into a museum.



Portuguese parliament launches website.

In 1998, Sousa Mendes received a posthumous tribute from the European Parliament and two years later his efforts were commemorated at a United Nations ceremony.

The website, initially in Portuguese but due to be translated into several languages, is supported by foreign and national universities and institutions, including the German Foreign Ministry and Jewish associations.

"Bit by bit, he's getting more widely known," Alvaro de Sousa Mendes, the grandson, said.

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR YAD VASHEM

Young Leaders



Eli Zborowski, Chairman American Society for Yad Vashem and Caroline Massel, Co-Chair Young Leadership Associates.



YLA Winter Gala Chairpeople Rebecca Hanus, Nadav Besner, and Nicole Pines.



Members of the Committee.

A sold-out crowd of nearly eight hundred young leaders enjoyed the evening with music, fun and friends. While the dress was casual, the atmosphere was one of a special Testimony project. Manhattan's Prince George Ballroom was the venue for the evening's revelry. The key to the evening's success was the hard work of the Young Leadership Associates: Rebecca Hanus, and Nicole Pines. Thanks are also in order for the support of the American Society for Yad Vashem: Lieberman, Jennifer Smith, and Jonathan Wilf, as well as the support of the community: Distenfeld, Michael Distenfeld, Gabriella Francis, David Fridman, Kessler, Aliza Kollander, Barry Levine, Avi Lieberman, Mikey Pinewski, Daniel Rieger, Emmy Salama-Caro, Danielle Schwartz, and many others.

Proceeds from the evening's events will benefit Yad Vashem's Pages of Testimony project, which honors those who perished in the Holocaust. We are now faced with a historic challenge for present and future generations.

For more information about the Pages of Testimony project, visit www.yadvashemusa.org.



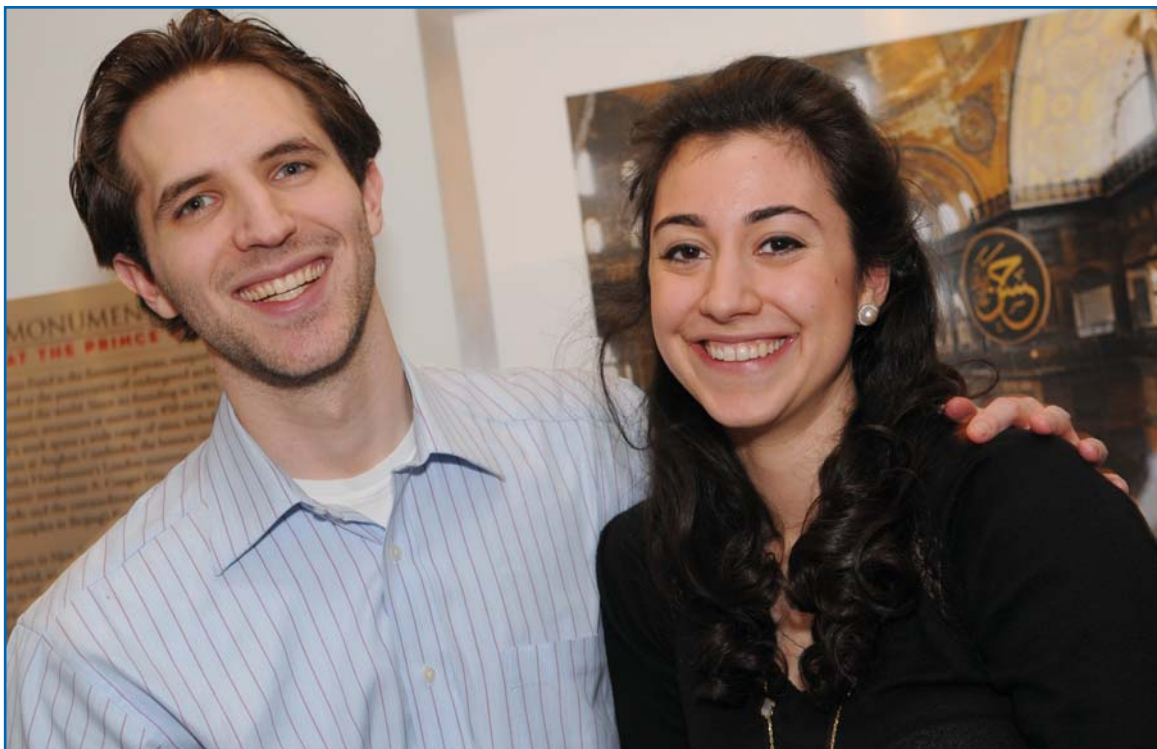
YLA Winter Gala participants and their friends.

Friendship Association Winter Gala

joined together on Thursday night February 21 for an evening of chic, the evening benefited the critically important Pages of Remembrance Project. The room quickly filled up as hundreds mingled, danced and enjoyed the hard work of the committee and its three chairs: Nadav Besner, the Event Committee Chairs: Mindy Schall, Julie Schwartz, Tova Hanus, the Entire Event Committee: Eric & Sara Abitbol, Brad Cooper, Claire Hanus, Jonathan Hanus, Julie Hanus, Danna Katzourin, Jennifer Schelle Osband, Jaci & Gonen Paradis, Justin Pines, Michael Wilf, Jessica Sigall and Jeffrey Wilf.

Pages of Testimony Project, an attempt to give back to the victims and provide an opportunity to collect, record and preserve these names for eternity.

including making a submission, visit our website at [www.friendshipassociation.org](#)



David Fridman and Gabriella Francis.



Danielle Schwartz and Barry Levine.



Inside the Ballroom.



REPORT FROM YAD VASHEM

GERMAN CHANCELLOR ANGELA MERKEL VISITS YAD VASHEM

German Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel, accompanied by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and eight Ministers from each government, visited Yad Vashem on March 17, 2008.

A memorial ceremony, with the participation of the Chancellor and the Prime



German Chancellor Dr. Angela Merkel lays a wreath in the Hall of Remembrance. To the Chancellor's left is Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and to her right is the Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev.

Minister, and Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate Avner Shalev, took place in the Hall of Remembrance.

Following the ceremony, the Chancellor visited the Children's Memorial, signed the Yad Vashem Guest Book, and offered a short statement.

A visibly moved Merkel declared that Germany accepted responsibility for its

Nazi past and was determined to work together with Israel for a common future.

Merkel also was given the honor of addressing Israel's parliament, the Knesset. Merkel opened her speech with a Hebrew sentence, thanking the parliament for giving her the "great honor" of addressing them in German. She immediately paid tribute to those killed by Nazi Germany during World War II.

"The mass murder of six million Jews, carried out in the name of Germany, has brought indescribable suffering to the Jewish people, Europe and the entire world," she said.

"The Shoah fills us Germans with shame. I bow before the victims. I bow before the survivors and before all those who helped them survive," she said, using the Hebrew word for Holocaust.

The plan to deliver the address in German captures the highly complex nature of the Germany-Israel relationship.

For some, especially Holocaust survivors, the idea of German being spoken in the Knesset is anathema. For others, the strong support for Israel from such a powerful European country, especially given its Nazi history, is seen as one of the major diplomatic achievements of Israel's 60 years of statehood.

illegal activities, thereby defining them as criminal, is a dangerous perversion of the events that occurred in Lithuania during the War."

The Holocaust in Lithuania was unique in that it is believed that most of the Jews there were murdered by local citizens. The "Order Police" began killing Jews as soon as the Soviets left in 1941, and even before German troops arrived. Out of a prewar population of 220,000, only a few thousand Jews survived the war in



Yitzhak Arad

Lithuania – representing the largest percentage of Jews murdered in one country during the Holocaust.

About 6 million Jews were killed by the Nazis and their collaborators in Europe during World War II.

Arad, a retired Israeli army general, headed Yad Vashem for 21 years until his retirement in 1993. His comprehensive study on the Holocaust in Eastern Europe, including Lithuania, was published three years ago.

CEREMONY HONORING RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS

In a moving ceremony recently held at Yad Vashem the title of Righteous Among the Nations was posthumously bestowed upon Jozef and Rozalia Streker of Poland.

The ceremony took place in the presence of Stanislaw Briks, grandson, and Eugeniusz Piatek, great-grandson of



Stanislaw Briks receiving the certificate of honor from Director of the Righteous Among the Nations Department Irena Steinfeldt.

Jozef and Rozalia Streker, both from Poland; Sue Stromer Talansky and Nina Gaspar, of the USA, daughters of Moty Stromer; Polish Ambassador to Israel Agnieszka Magdziak-Miszewska and Ms. Irena Steinfeldt, Director of the Righteous Among the Nations Department.

Upon accepting the medal and certificate of honor on behalf of his grandparents, Mr. Stanislaw Briks said: "My grandparents were quite modest people. My grandmother was a very religious person; she had always told that we are all children of one God. Their strong faith in God helped them not to hesitate to give a man of Jewish origin, Mr. Marek (Moty) Stromer, a helpful hand."

In addition to the recognition ceremony the launch of Moty Stromer's diary (written while in hiding while at the Streker's farm) also took place. The diary Memoirs of an Unfortunate Person was translated into English from its original Yiddish as part of Yad Vashem's Holocaust Survivors' Memoirs Project. Dr. David Silberklang, Editor-in-Chief of Yad Vashem Publications spoke about the unique diary and its historical significance.

Moty (Marek) Stromer was born in *Kamionka-Strumilowa*, near *Lvov*, Poland, in 1910. The Stromers had a liquor business in *Kamionka*, and also ran a small retail business in the town. Moty worked in the family business, and lived in *Kamionka* with his parents, siblings and extended family until the outbreak of the war.

When the Nazis invaded *Kamionka* in 1941, Moty was 31 and about to become engaged to Pepi Haberkorn. The planned wedding was never to take place. Soon their lives, the family and the community were to be destroyed forever. Shortly after the German occupation, Moty Stromer's grandfather Reuven and his great uncle Chaim-Hersh were brutally murdered.

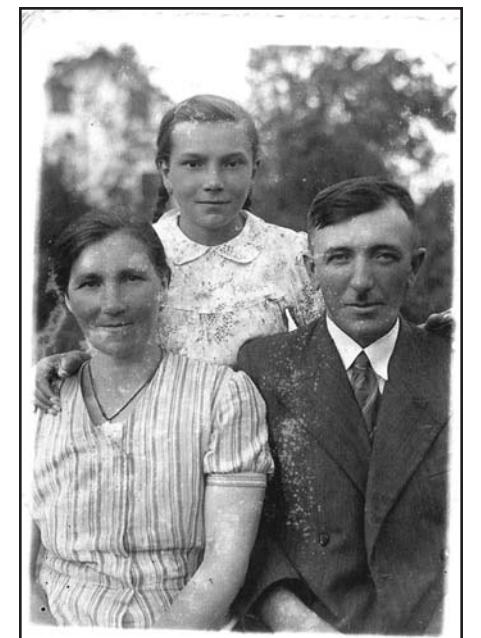
Moty fled to *Lvov*, where he was incarcerated in the ghetto with his married sister Zlata, his brother-in-law Mechel Eisen and their children. From there, Moty was sent to the *Janowska* forced labor camp.

All Stromers in Poland, the entire family with the exception of Moty, were murdered. Moty managed to escape and headed back to *Kamionka*, where he

found refuge at the farm of Jozef and Rozalia Streker, ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) living with their daughter Helen in a rural area called *Jagonia*. Josef Streker had been a regular customer of the Stromers before the war, and had even once borrowed some money from his Jewish business acquaintances. Now it was Stromer who was desperately in need of help. Other acquaintances of his had turned him down and wouldn't let him into their homes, but when he came knocking on Streker's house, he was invited in, given milk and bread and a big coat to warm himself.

The Strekers hid Moty in the attic of one of their barns, and took care of all his needs. Every day, Rozalia brought him food. Moty was grateful for any task that would provide a distraction from his daily tedium. To keep him busy, the Strekers also brought Moty a blank ledger

book and a pencil, and he began to write a diary-memoir – a poignant document describing his experiences since the beginning of the war. In his diary he describes the terrible fear – his own and his rescuers'. For hiding Moty placed the Strekers in grave danger – from the



The Strekers: Rozalia, Helen and Jozef in *Jagonia*, 1943.

Germans, from their neighbors, from nationalist partisans. The danger was present and became part of their lives. Sometimes their resolve wavered, but they let Stromer stay on. He remained hidden in the attic from the Summer of 1943 until the Spring of 1944, almost a whole year. As the Russian front moved closer, the Strekers had to abandon the farm and move westwards. They too had become refugees.

Moty kept in contact with the Strekers after the war. The contact was maintained with their daughter Helena even after they passed away.

In its meeting of February 18, 2007, the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous Among the Nations at Yad Vashem, decided to award Jozef and Rozalia Streker the title of Righteous Among the Nations.

ISRAEL'S HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL PROTESTS LITHUANIAN INVESTIGATION OF HOLOCAUST

Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in February handed a harsh letter of protest to visiting Lithuanian Foreign Minister Petras Vaitiekunas, denouncing an investigation of a renowned Holocaust historian and World War II resistance fighter.

Last year, Lithuania opened a criminal investigation against Yitzhak Arad, a former director of Yad Vashem, who survived the Holocaust in Lithuania and fought with local resistance fighters against the Nazis. Lithuanian authorities officially asked Israel to allow it to investigate the 81-year-old Arad on suspicion that he took part in the murder of Lithuanian civilians during the Holocaust. The case is based on Arad's memoir, in which he describes his experiences as a partisan in Nazi-occupied Lithuania.

In the letter, Yad Vashem chairman Avner Shalev charged that Lithuania was conducting "historical revisionism and distortion" that aimed to compare the partisan activity with the crimes of the Nazis and their collaborators.

"Destructive historical revisionism seems to be taking place in Lithuania regarding this case, by calling into question legitimate, previously lauded wartime combat in an obvious attempt to propagate unfounded beliefs and distort historical truths," he wrote in the letter, handed to Vaitiekunas.

"It is clear that initiating criminal proceedings into Dr. Arad's involvement in Lithuanian partisan activity during World War II is tantamount to a call for an investigation into all partisan activity," he wrote. "Any attempt to equate those actions with

BELGIAN AUTHOR OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVAL STORY ADMITS IT'S A FAKE

Almost nothing Misha Defonseca wrote about herself or her horrific childhood during the Holocaust was true.

She didn't live with a pack of wolves to escape the Nazis. She didn't trek 1,900 miles across Europe in search of her deported parents, nor kill a German soldier in self-defense. She's not even Jewish.

Defonseca, a Belgian writer now living in Massachusetts, admitted through her lawyers that her best-selling book, "Misha: A Memoire of the Holocaust Years," was an elaborate fantasy she kept repeating, even as the book was translated into 18 languages and made into a feature film in France.

"This story is mine. It is not actually reality, but my reality, my way of surviving," Defonseca said in a statement.

"I ask forgiveness to all who felt betrayed. I beg you to put yourself in my place, of a 4-year-old girl who was very lost," the statement said.

Defonseca wrote in her book that Nazis seized her parents when she was a child, forcing her to wander the forests and villages of Europe alone for four years. She claimed she found herself trapped in the Warsaw ghetto and was adopted by a pack of wolves that protected her.

Her two Brussels-based lawyers said the author acknowledged her story was not autobiographical. In the statement, Defonseca said she never fled her home in Brussels during the war to find her parents.

Defonseca says her real name is Monique De Wael and that her parents

were arrested and killed by Nazis as Belgian resistance fighters.

The statement said her parents were arrested when she was 4 and she was taken care of by her grandfather and uncle. She said she was poorly treated by her adopted family, called a "daughter of a traitor" because of her parents' role in the resistance, which she said led her to "feel Jewish."

She said there were moments when she "found it difficult to differentiate between what was real and what was part of my imagination."

Pressure on the author to defend the accuracy of her book had grown recently, after the release of evidence found by Sharon Sergeant, a genealogical researcher in Waltham. Sergeant said she found clues in the unpublished U.S. version of the book, including Defonseca's maiden name "De Wael" — which was changed in the French version — and photos.

After a few months of research, she found Defonseca's Belgium baptismal certificate and school record, as well as information that showed her parents were members of the Belgian resistance.

"Each piece was plausible, but the difficulty was when you put it all together," Sergeant said.

Others also had doubts.

"I'm not an expert on relations between humans and wolves, but I am a specialist of the persecution of Jews, and they (Defonseca's family) can't be found in the archives," Belgian historian Maxime Steinberg told RTL television. "The De Wael family is not Jewish, nor were they



Misha Defonseca.

registered as Jewish."

Defonseca's attorneys, siblings Nathalie and Marc Uyttendaele, contacted the author to show her evidence published in the Belgian daily *Le Soir*, which also questioned her story.

"We gave her this information and it was very difficult. She was confronted with a reality that is different from what she has been living for 70 years," Nathalie Uyttendaele said.

Defonseca's admission is just the latest controversy surrounding her 1997 book, which also spawned a multimillion dollar legal battle between the woman, her co-author and the book's U.S. publisher.

Defonseca had been asked to write the book by publisher Jane Daniel in the 1990s, after Daniel heard the writer tell the story in a Massachusetts synagogue.

Daniel and Defonseca fell out over profits received from the best-selling book, which led to a lawsuit. In 2005, a Boston court ordered Daniel to pay Defonseca and her ghostwriter Vera Lee \$22.5 million. Defonseca's lawyers said Daniel has not yet paid the court-ordered sum.

Daniel said she felt vindicated by Defonseca's admission and would try to get the judgment overturned. She said she could not fully research Defonseca's story before it was published because the woman claimed she did not know her parents' names, her birthday or where she was born.

"There was nothing to go on to research," she said.

Lee, of Newton, muttered "Oh my God" when told Defonseca made up her childhood and was not Jewish. She said she always believed the stories the woman told her as they prepared to write the book, and no research she did gave her a reason not to.

"She always maintained that this was truth as she recalled it, and I trusted that that was the case," Lee said. "I was just totally bowled over by the news."

THREE DAYS TO COMMEMORATE THE HOLOCAUST?

BY DR. ERVIN BIRNBAUM,
THE JEWISH PRESS

The observance in January of the UN-sanctioned International Holocaust Memorial Day once again raised the issue of a multiplicity of Holocaust memorial days. Does this add to the stature and significance of Holocaust remembrance, or just the opposite? And what does each of these memorial days signify?

Once World War II was over, the Jewish people felt a need to follow the traditional requirement of reciting *Kaddish* for the departed. This is normally done on the anniversary of a person's death. What should be done, however, in instances where the day of death is not known, as was the case with many, if not most, of the *Shoah* victims?

Israeli Chief Rabbis Herzog and Uziel determined, late in 1948, that the most appropriate day for the recital of *Kaddish* on behalf of those whose day of demise is not known is the fast day *Asara B'Tevet* (the tenth day of the Hebrew month of *Tevet*).

Indeed, the first time the fast day arrived after the chief rabbis' decision — January 11, 1949 — Jewish communities worldwide accepted it as the "Yom *Kaddish Klali*," the day of general *Kaddish* for all victims of Nazi persecution who perished with their precise day of death unmarked.

Originally the 10th of *Tevet* signaled the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, leading to the destruction of the First Temple. Later, the Sages attached to that day other events, such as the order by King Ptolemy of Egypt to translate the Bible into Greek by seventy sages, which to the

rabbis marked the beginning of the process of Hellenization and degeneration, and the tragic death of Ezra, who in the rabbis' eyes was a close second — if not an equal — to Moses our Teacher.

The rabbis did that, in full awareness that the *yahrzeit* of Ezra was really on the 9th of *Tevet*, and the anniversary for the Septuagint was the 8th of *Tevet*. They found it necessary to combine dates so as not to crowd our calendar with days of mourning and sorrow.

Therefore, it seemed reasonable and practical to also utilize the 10th of *Tevet* as the *Yom Kaddish Klali* for the victims of the *Shoah* whose date of death remained unknown.

Combining events for a joint memorial is not unknown in the Jewish tradition. Why then could not the *Shoah* be latched on to *Tisha B'Av*, an idea that in fact was considered by a number of Jewish community leaders? The answer lies in the uniqueness of the Nazis' destruction process.

This wasn't a butchery where the Nazis literally waded in rivers of Jewish blood, comparable to so many tragic episodes in Jewish and world history. No, the Nazis constructed a carefully designed, well-oiled machinery designed to accomplish the total annihilation of the Jews, down to utilizing the parts of their bodies for the advancement of their economy and conducting medical experiments on them for the greater welfare of Western Man.

The 10th of *Tevet* answered a deep need for religious expression on a profoundly personal level. It did not satisfy the need of a nation to express its communal horror at a diabolical attempt to liquidate it to the last infirm old and the last newborn infant. For that purpose, Israel's *Yom Hashoah* was set by an ordinance of the Knesset on April 12, 1951.

Beginning with the eve of the day thus set aside, all entertainment and dining facilities are to be closed, flags on public buildings are lowered to half-mast, commemorative services are held for the martyrs and the heroes of resistance, in the morning the sirens are sounded for two minutes calling on the country's residents to unite in memory with the victims, schools hold commemorative assemblies, and more.

The original *Knesset* proposal envisioned the 14th day of *Nissan*, the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (April 19, 1943) as *Yom Hashoah*; this, however, proved problematic, as that date is the eve of the joyous festival of *Pesach*. So it was moved to the 27th day of *Nissan*, which falls between *Pesach* and Israel Independence Day.

Given that the Jewish people had two days for marking the *Shoah* — the 10th of *Tevet* as the *Yom Kaddish Klali* with its deep personal, religious significance, and the 27th of *Nissan* as the day of remembrance of the victims and fighters of the *Shoah* who died only because they were Jews — why did the United Nations find it necessary to pass a resolution on November 1, 2005, establishing January 27 as an official day of commemorating the Holocaust, designating it as Holocaust Memorial Day?

It took the world 60 years to come to terms with its conscience and face up to the most extraordinary annihilation process ever undertaken — and to which it was a silent bystander and witness. Nevertheless, the United Nations resolution is a laudable document. It rejects denial of the Holocaust. It declares that every member nation has an obligation to

(Continued on page 15)

CONDUCTOR REVIVES MUSIC OF HOLOCAUST

BY ARTHUR SPIEGELMAN, REUTERS

The Nazis destroyed their lives, crushed their souls and burned their music. Now more than 60 years after World War Two ended, an American conductor is trying to restore the lost music of the Holocaust and its composers before history forgets.

Los Angeles Opera conductor James Conlon last year started a program called "Recovered Voices," designed to introduce operagoers to a lost generation of composers. Some people questioned whether the \$5 million program was needed, but now the whole town seems to be cheering.

Two fully staged one-act operas, "The Dwarf" (*Der Zwerg*) and "The Broken Jug" (*Der zerbrochene Krug*) opened to rave reviews in February. The audience's initial silence, after Conlon put down his baton, quickly turned to applause and an extended standing ovation.

The acclaim came too late for their respective composers, Alexander Zemlinsky, who died broke and forgotten in exile in New York, and Viktor Ullmann, who was killed in a gas chamber at Auschwitz.

Conlon, 57, said in an interview with Reuters that "Recovered Voices" had been dogged by a nagging question — why was he bothering to revive these works?

Was it because the music was of such high quality that it needed to be heard again — Conlon's belief — or because it was time that the music world honored the composers, mostly Austrian and German Jews, silenced by the Nazis.

"The Dwarf" is the tale of an ugly but noble dwarf given as a birthday gift to a Spanish princess, who considers him her toy.

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AUSTRIA'S FILM EXPLORES JEWISH DILEMMA DURING THE SHOAH

BY TOM TUGEND, JTA

Much of the Jewish Oscar buzz was focused on director Joseph Cedar's *"Beaufort"* and the chances of an Israeli film picking up an Academy Award for the first time.

But another Jewish-themed film — the Austrian-made *"Counterfeiters"* — received foreign-language Oscar honors.

Set in 1943, the film probes the moral dilemmas facing a special group of Jewish concentration camp inmates in a little-known and remarkable episode of World War II.

As the Nazis realize that the war is going against them, they try one more ploy — to wreck the economies of Britain and the United States with massive amounts of perfectly counterfeited pounds sterling and dollars. Under the codename *"Operation Bernard,"* the Germans comb concentration camps and put together a team of more than 100 skilled Jewish printers, photographers and engravers.

In *Sachsenhausen*, the prisoners are placed in two completely isolated barracks, dubbed *"The Golden Cage,"* where they are given soft beds, good food, civilian clothes, first-class equipment and piped-in music.

Heading the team is Salomon Sorowitch, a character based on one Salomon Smolianoff, a Russian-born Jew nicknamed "Sally," who lived high in the Berlin of the 1920s and early 1930s as *"The King of the Counterfeiters."*

Faced with the choice of producing

pound notes so perfect that even the Bank of England accepts them as real, or instant death, Sorowitch does the Nazis' bidding.

By the end of the war, the *Sachsenhausen* team had turned out 134 million pounds, three times the amount of British currency



"The Counterfeiters," an Austrian film that probes the moral dilemmas of concentration camp inmates, won the foreign-language Oscar.

reserves, and was getting close to producing equally perfect dollar bills.

In the film, director Stefan Ruzowitzky does not draw Sorowitch, portrayed by Karl Markovics, as just a craven collaborator. Sorowitch protects a fellow prisoner who is trying to sabotage the operation, and uses his skills to get medicine for an ill inmate.

"Counterfeiters" retains the tension of a top thriller, but it goes deeper than that. It probes a haunting moral question — given a chance at life, even temporary life, at the price of aiding the enemy, what path will a man choose?

The actual Smolianoff survived the war and soon resumed his old occupation, adding the "rediscovery" of Old Master

paintings to his repertoire. He died in Argentina in the 1960s.

The film's ending, building on hearsay evidence, has Sorowitch after liberation totting a suitcase full of fake currency and heading for Monte Carlo, where he purposely loses the entire fortune at the gaming tables.

Director-writer Ruzowitzky's background and motivation is as interesting as the movie itself.

The Viennese filmmaker's grandparents on both sides were Nazis or Nazi sympathizers, who, like most Austrians of the war and post-war generation saw themselves more as victims than perpetrators of the German atrocities.

"My grandparents would acknowledge to me the facts of the Holocaust, but considered it a collateral damage to the war," Ruzowitzky said during a phone interview.

Given his background and nationality, the director felt he had a responsibility to deal with the Holocaust era, but an equal duty not to exercise moral judgment on the Jews who collaborated in Operation Bernard.

One reason he closed the film with the scene at a Monte Carlo casino "was to give Sally some redemption, or atonement, at the end," Ruzowitzky said.

From his considerable research on concentration camps, he concluded that "the system was designed so that the inmates would harm each other."

He cites one survivor, a doctor, as saying, "If you tried to do anything good, it would lead to catastrophe."

WRITING ABOUT THE ALLIES AND THE HOLOCAUST: THE YEAR'S TEN MOST ABSURD STATEMENTS

BY RAFAEL MEDOFF

For many years after World War II, it was widely assumed that the Allies did all that was possible to save Jews from the Holocaust. The process of shattering that myth began in 1968 with the publication of two groundbreaking books: journalist Arthur Morse's *While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy*, and the first scholarly study of the topic, Prof. David S. Wyman's *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis 1938-1941*. In the four decades since then, numerous important scholarly studies have been published, led by Prof. Wyman's bestseller *The Abandonment of the Jews*.

Yet despite these advances in scholarship, as well as a widespread public awareness that the Allies' response to the Nazi mass murder was grossly inadequate, a number of serious factual errors and distortions of the subject continue to surface each year in various books and articles.

Some of these ill-informed statements are motivated by political partisanship. Some are the result of carelessness or ignorance. They are usually made by individuals who have done little or no original scholarly research in the field. Whatever their source, they undermine the public's ability to understand what really happened during the Nazi era and the lessons

to be learned from those experiences.

To help counteract such misinformation, a panel of prominent scholars assembled by The David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies has published its first annual list of the *"Ten Most Absurd Statements"* about how the U.S. and its allies responded to the Nazi genocide. The list was released in conjunction with the recent commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The judges were Prof. Wyman; Prof. Laurel Leff, author of *Buried by "The Times"*; Dr. Racelle Weiman of Temple University, director emeritus of Hebrew Union College's Center for Holocaust and Humanity Education; Prof. Bat-Ami Zucker, author of *In Search of Refuge*; Dr. Alex Grobman, author of *Battling for Souls*; Prof. Judith Baumel-Schwartz, author of *Unfulfilled Promise*; and myself.

Our final selections for the Ten Most Absurd Statements in 2007 About the Allies' Response to the Holocaust:

1. "Within Germany, bombing the camps or the railroad lines carrying people to the camps would only have killed swiftly men and women who would otherwise have died slowly and miserably." — Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Journals 1952-2000*, Penguin Press, 2007, p. 675.

Comment: In fact, (1) bombing the camps might or might not have resulted in some Jewish casualties, but not in num-

bers even remotely close to the number of those being killed by the Nazis; (2) bombing the railroad lines in all likelihood would have resulted in few if any Jewish casualties, since the planes would be targeting the railroad tracks and bridges, not the railroad cars moving along them; and (3) the Jews in Auschwitz were not dying "slowly"; during the period when Allied bombing was feasible, they were being gassed at the rate of as many as 12,000 daily.

2. "The United States accepted about twice as many refugees as the rest of the world combined, 200,000 out of 300,000." — Robert Rosen, *Saving the Jews*, paperback edition, Thunder's Mouth Press, 2007, p. 442.

Comment: In fact, "the rest of the world" took in about 365,000 refugees, meaning that the approximately 200,000 admitted by the United States represented about 35 percent of the total, according to the figures reported in widely accepted history texts concerning refugees from Nazism.

3. "Amid all the pressing concerns of the war on land, at sea and in the air, and the desperate struggle to find the means to challenge the continuing Nazi domination of Europe, Churchill always made time to deal with Jewish issues." — Martin Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews: A Lifelong Friendship*, Henry Holt and Company, 2007, p. 196.

ANTI-SEMITISM DOWN IN THE UNITED STATES

Anti-Semitic incidents in the United States declined for the third consecutive year, according to the Anti-Defamation League.

The ADL's annual Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents catalogued 1,357 incidents of vandalism, harassment and acts of hate against Jews in 2007 — a 13 percent drop from the 2006 total of 1,554. Anti-Semitic incidents had peaked in 2004 at 1,821 incidents.

Data in the 2007 audit, drawn from official crime statistics and information collected by the ADL's network of regional offices, include criminal and non-criminal activities.

"We are certainly encouraged that the total number of anti-Semitic incidents has declined for three years in a row," said ADL National Director Abraham Foxman. "Yet we are still troubled that there are so many incidents reported, and that these incidents often involve expressions of anti-Jewish animus that are ugly and deeply hurtful to their victims and the communities where they occur."

Not surprisingly, the states with the highest numbers of reported incidents were the states with the highest concentrations of Jews. New York topped the list with 351 incidents, up from 284 in 2006, followed by New Jersey (144 incidents), California (186), Florida (127), Massachusetts (95), Pennsylvania (99) and Connecticut (49). Most of the reported incidents of harassment involved anti-Jewish epithets and occasionally a light assault. In one widely reported incident, a Jewish man suffered serious injuries in November when he was beaten by several assailants in the largely Orthodox enclave of Lakewood, N.J. The audit noted that acts of vandalism were mostly directed at synagogues and Jewish cemeteries, and often involved the use of swastikas.

Comment: In fact, Churchill refused to deal personally with news of the Holocaust or appeals for rescue, directing all such inquiries to the Foreign Office, which prepared the replies.

4. "Churchill's emphatic instruction [in favor of bombing Auschwitz] did not need to be carried out. Three days after he endorsed the bombing of railway lines leading from Hungary to Auschwitz, the deportation of Jews from Hungary to Auschwitz was halted." — Martin Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews: A Lifelong Friendship*, Henry Holt and Company, 2007, p. 212.

Comment: In fact, Churchill and his aides did not know the deportations had stopped until fully eleven days after he first made that July 7 "instruction" to bomb Auschwitz; it was not until July 18 that the news of the halt to the deportations reached the Foreign Office. Thus, between July 7 and July 18, the Foreign Office and the Air Ministry were passing the proposal back and forth between them, despite their assumption that deportations were continuing; and Churchill did not pursue the matter in any way during that period, even though he had no reason to believe the deportations had stopped.

Even after the Hungarian deportations stopped on July 18, Auschwitz continued to function and approximately 150,000

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ISRAEL MUSEUM EXHIBITS ART LOOTED BY NAZIS AND UNCLAIMED

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

Israel's national museum opened two new exhibits of paintings with a tragic history: They were stolen from the museums and salons of Europe by the Nazis during World War II and never reclaimed by their rightful owners, many of whom perished in the war.

The exhibits are meant to bring to life the dramatic stories behind the art, and perhaps reunite the works with their rightful owners. Visitors who recognize a painting as their own and can prove it can file a claim and potentially take it home. "It is possible that someone might surface who might find something that belonged to his or her family," said James Snyder, the Israel Museum's director, as workers put the final touches on a red-walled gallery at the museum in Jerusalem. "Frankly, if that happened, it would really underscore the point that museums are making an effort to close this still-open chapter in the history of the loss that occurred broadly during the war," he said. Worldwide, experts say, anywhere between 250,000 and 600,000 pieces of art looted by the Nazis were never claimed and remain in the possession of museums, governments and private collectors.

Consisting of some 80 pieces in all, the exhibits at the Israel Museum include works by masters like Henri Matisse and Georges Seurat, paintings owned by the Rothschild banking family, and other masterpieces worth millions.

The first exhibit, *Looking for Owners*, is made up of 53 paintings on loan from French museums. Put together by a team of Israeli and French curators, it includes several works owned by prominent Nazis like Joachim von Ribbentrop, Hitler's top diplomat.

Most of the French paintings are well-known and have been painstakingly researched, meaning that there is little chance that they will be claimed 60 years after the war's end, Snyder said. The companion exhibit, *Orphaned Art*,

includes mostly lesser-known paintings and items of Judaica, a small sampling of the some 1,200 pieces given to the Israel Museum decades ago by a group known as the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization, which was entrusted by the Allies with returning unclaimed Jewish property in postwar Europe.

The pieces were amassed in Allied collection points set up to process artwork looted by the Nazis.

Also on display are photographs taken after the war showing warehouses with thousands of crates of looted paintings, shelves of sculptures, and dozens of Torah scrolls stacked like logs. The exhibits include computer terminals connected to databases of looted art, so visitors can research the pieces on view. Over the years, the Israel Museum has returned some 20 pieces to owners or heirs, Snyder said.

The exhibit of art the museum received from JRSO includes a 19th-century wedding portrait of the beautiful Charlotte de Rothschild, scion of the wealthy Jewish banking family, along with one of her husband and cousin Lionel. The paintings hung in a Jewish nursing home in Frankfurt before they were taken by German troops.

The most famous painting in the JRSO exhibit is one by the early 20th century Austrian master Egon Schiele thought to be worth more than \$20 million.

In the exhibit of art from France, nearly every painting has a story.

Some were seized by the Nazis for inclusion in a museum of European art that Hitler planned to build in Linz, Austria. *The Bathers*, an 1858 nude by the French realist Gustave Courbet, was purchased by von Ribbentrop, the Nazi Foreign Minister, in a legitimate transaction with a Parisian art dealer.

The Allies took the painting after the war, and Von Ribbentrop was hanged for war crimes in 1946. Landscape, the *Pink Wall*, an early Matisse, was owned by Dr. Kurt Gerstein, an SS officer who took an active

part in Nazi Germany's methodical murder of Europe's Jews and others they deemed undesirable. Gerstein was responsible for transporting Zyklon B, the gas used for mass killing at the Nazi death camps. The painting was found by Allied troops hidden in an alcove behind a plaster all in Gerstein's house after the war. The Nazi officer killed himself in July 1945. The exhibit also includes several pieces that were successfully restored to their owners, like *La Buveuse*, a 1658 painting by Dutch master Pieter de Hooch that hung in the salon of financier Edouard de Rothschild in Paris before the war. "This painting was coveted by Hitler. He knew about it, he wanted it, and he made every effort to get it," said Shlomit Steinberg, one of the exhibit's curators. Reclaimed after the war and returned to the Rothschilds, *La Buveuse* was later donated to the *Louvre* by Edouard's daughter.

All in all, the Nazis took 100,000 pieces of art from France during the war. Of those, 60,000 were recovered, and 45,000 of them were returned to their owners or heirs. Most of the rest were auctioned off.

With the new exhibit, the Israel Museum is also making the point that it is forthcoming about the looted art in its possession, in the wake of the accusations leveled against it last year by the Holocaust restitution group.

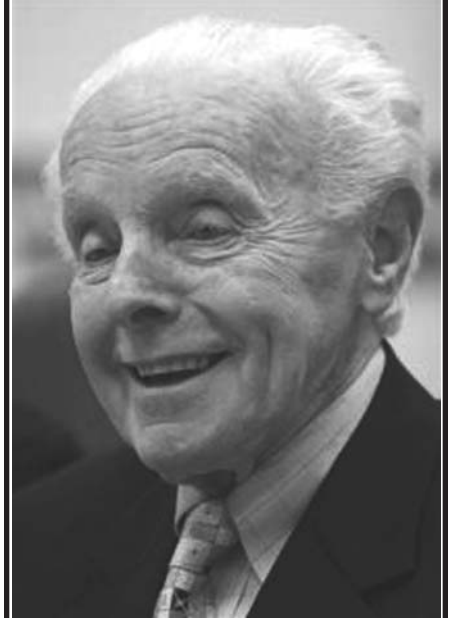
The group, headed by a Holocaust survivor and entrusted by Israeli law with returning looted property to Holocaust victims, demanded the museum turn over all of the unclaimed art in its possession and charged that the museum was not doing enough to return the art to its rightful owners.

The museum rejected the criticism, saying that as a national institution of the Jewish state it was a fitting place for the art. Since then, the institution has launched an Internet database of all of the looted art in its storerooms, and the restitution group has dropped its demand for the artwork.

YAD VASHEM MOURNS THE PASSING OF TOM LANTOS

Yad Vashem mourns the passing of US House of Representative Tom Lantos and extends its sincerest condolences to Mrs. Lantos and the entire Lantos family.

Rep. Tom Lantos, the only survivor of the Holocaust elected to the U.S.



Congress, and who became an expert in foreign affairs and champion of human rights, died on February 11, 2008 after recently being diagnosed with cancer.

The 80-year-old Democrat, who represented his northern California district since 1981, had announced on January 2 that he would retire from Congress at the end of this year because of ill health. He was diagnosed with cancer in late December.

Lantos was born in Hungary and as a teenager twice escaped Nazi labor camps. Lantos was part of a resistance movement against the Nazis during the German occupation of Hungary. In his floor speeches, he sometimes referred to himself as one of the few living members of Congress who fought against fascism.

Lantos made his first run for office in 1980, and was reelected 13 times.

When he announced his retirement from Congress, Lantos expressed his gratitude toward his adopted country, saying, "It is only in the United States that a penniless survivor of the Holocaust and a fighter in the anti-Nazi underground could have received an education, raised a family and had the privilege of serving the last three decades of his life as a member of Congress."

During the war, Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg protected Lantos and other occupants of a Budapest "safe house" apartment building from arrest by Nazi soldiers.

Four decades later, Lantos, by then a member of the U.S. Congress, successfully pushed legislation granting honorary U.S. citizenship to Wallenberg.

Tom Lantos was an honorary member of the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Lantos was "the embodiment of what it meant to have one's freedom denied and then to find it and to insist that America stand for spreading the benefits of freedom and prosperity for others."

GERMANY LAUNCHES COMIC BOOK ON HOLOCAUST

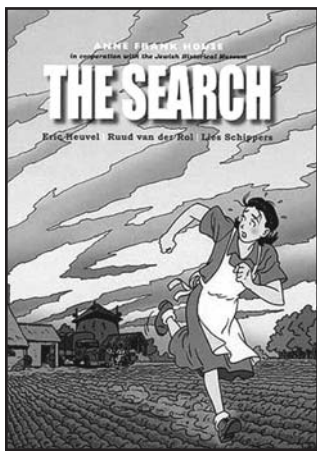
German schools launched a comic book that aims to teach above all underprivileged children about the Nazi era and the Holocaust.

Although German schools already make a big effort to give pupils a thorough education about the Nazi era, racist violence remains a problem, and the revival of Germany's Jewish community has brought a rise in anti-Semitism with it.

The Tintin-style comic book is called *The Search*, and tells the story of Esther, a fictional Jewish survivor of the Holocaust.

Created by the Dutch cartoonist Eric Heuvel, it is already available in the Netherlands. Berlin's Anne Frank Centre, which is backing the project, thinks it will serve a purpose in Germany, too.

"There is not a major gap in the way Germany teaches the history of this era, but this is a new approach," said spokeswoman Melina Feingold, noting that the book could reach some of the children who are least interested in schoolwork:



"We hope the comic will get even underprivileged kids interested in learning about the Holocaust."

The 61-page book, already available in various European languages, will be used alongside worksheets in history classes at secondary schools in Berlin for six months, after which the project hopes to go nationwide.

The book, based on fact, describes how Jews in Germany and the Nazi-occupied Netherlands experienced the genocidal Nazi persecution that took the lives of 6 million European Jews.

It includes the *Night of Broken Glass* in November 1938, when Jews were beaten and their homes, businesses and synagogues were ransacked and, later on, the deportations to the Auschwitz concentration camp.

Through pictures and realistic dialogue, the book depicts the suffering and humiliation that Jews endured as they were stripped of their livelihoods, ostracized

and, finally, sent to camps to be worked to death or gassed.

After five decades, when it had only a handful of Jewish residents, Germany now has the world's fastest-growing Jewish community, with 220,000 arriving from the former Soviet Union since 1990.

But violent anti-Semitic crime is also



increasing. Last month, five Jewish teenagers were attacked by a group of punks and subjected to anti-Semitic abuse.

The new comic book is a sequel to Heuvel's *The Discovery*, also aimed at school children, based on Jewish history in Europe from 1933 to 1940.

WRITING ABOUT THE ALLIES AND THE HOLOCAUST: THE YEAR'S TEN MOST ABSURD STATEMENTS

(Continued from page 12)

Jews were murdered there between July 7 and the liberation of the camp six months later. Even though bombing still needed to be carried out during that period, Churchill never revisited the issue.

5. "During WWII as prime minister, Churchill encouraged more Jewish immigration into Palestine ..." — Michael Makovsky, "Winston Churchill Was a Zionist at Heart," Washington Jewish Week, November 8, 2007.

Comment: In fact, Churchill continued the White Paper policy of severely restricting Jewish immigration to Palestine throughout World War Two.

6. "[A]fter the war began, virtually nothing could be done to rescue or even assist the Jews of Nazi-occupied Europe, who were prisoners of a madman who was bent on killing all of them as his life's mission and who was dictator of a continent." — William D. Rubinstein, "Response to the David Wyman Special Issue," Journal of Ecumenical Studies 40:3-4, dated Summer-Fall 2004 but published in June 2007.

Comment: In fact, there are numerous examples of Jews being "rescued or assisted after the war began." About 26,000 European Jewish refugees reached Palestine between 1941 and 1944 in transports organized by Zionist activists. An estimated 27,000 Jewish refugees escaped to Switzerland and were granted haven during the war years, though thousands were turned away. More than 7,000 Danish Jews were smuggled out of Nazi-occupied Denmark to safety in Sweden in 1943. Bulgaria's Orthodox Church, in partnership with its right-wing government, refused Nazi attempts to deport its 60,000 Jewish citizens. Thousands of Jews escaped

France in 1942 by fleeing to Spain.

Thousands of Jewish refugees managed to reach Allied-liberated Italy. Pressure by the U.S. government's War Refugee Board in 1944 played a key role in Rumania's agreement to move 48,000



Children of the Auschwitz after liberation by the Red Army.

Jews of *Transnistria* out of the path of the retreating German Army and into Rumania's interior, saving their lives. The WRB also financed a variety of operations to help refugees survive in France, Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, including bribing German officials, providing supplies and forged documents, and sustaining some 8,000 Jewish orphans hidden in France.

The War Refugee Board mobilized the international diplomatic pressure that stopped the deportation of Jews from Budapest to Auschwitz in 1944, and through Raoul Wallenberg saved many thousands from the Nazis in Budapest. As a result, some 120,000 Jews were still alive in Budapest at war's end.

7. "[E]ven had American Jews acted in complete solidarity, they could not have altered American policies in an era when the nation was consumed by the Great Depression and the Second World War." — Beth S. Wenger, "The Jewish Americans: Three Centuries of Jewish Voices in America," Doubleday, 2007, p. 217.

Comment: In fact, even though they were divided, Jews did succeed in altering America's rescue policy. The Bergson Group played a major role in generating the public outcry and Congressional pressure in late 1943 that helped bring about President Roosevelt's creation of the War Refugee Board. Wenger mentions the creation of the Board (p. 215), but depicts Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr. as being single-handedly responsible for its establishment, without any reference to the role of the Bergson Group or Congress.

8. "Nor did notable or important Jewish leaders or organizations in America or Palestine request that American forces bomb Auschwitz at a time when bombing might have accomplished something." — Robert Rosen, "Saving the Jews," paperback edition, Thunder's Mouth Press, 2007, p. 404.

Comment: In fact, numerous important Jewish leaders or organizations in America and Palestine asked the Allies to bomb Auschwitz in 1944, when it might have saved many lives, including Nahum Goldmann, co-chairman of the World Jewish Congress; Maurice Perlzweig, head of the British section of the World Jewish Congress; Chaim Weizmann, president of the World Zionist Organization/Jewish Agency; Moshe

Shertok, head of the Political Division of the World Zionist Organization/Jewish Agency; Yitzhak Gruenbaum, chairman of the Rescue Committee of the Jewish Agency Executive, in Jerusalem; and the Jewish Agency representatives in Cairo, Budapest, and Geneva.

9. "Nine days after meeting with Wise [i.e., December 17, 1942], Roosevelt induced Churchill and Stalin to join with him in a Declaration on Jewish Massacres ..." — Jean Edward Smith, "FDR," Random House, 2007, p. 609.

Comment: In fact, the British Foreign Office, not President Roosevelt, proposed the idea of the declaration. Roosevelt administration officials actually watered down the wording of the original British draft.

10. "[W]hile accusations have long been made about [The New York Times] failure to publish news about events related to the Holocaust, the record shows that articles about the [American Jewish] Conference appeared at least six times from August 31 to September 3, 1943, twice on the front page." — Bette Roth Young, "The American Jewish Response to the Holocaust — a Reconsideration," Midstream, March/April 2007, p. 33.

Comment: In fact, the *Times* sought to undermine the American Jewish Conference by "balancing" its front-page coverage of the Conference with a half-page story about the alleged increase in Jewish support for the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism.

Dr. Rafael Medoff is director of The David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies. His latest book, "Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for an American Response to the Holocaust," will be published this summer by Purdue University Press.

KILLING AFTER THE KILLING

(Continued from page 4)

Fear is a word we use often in reference to dictatorships and totalitarian regimes; it is, for want of a better term, employed inadequately to speak of the Holocaust. In a dark time, on a continent overcome by the din of triumphant Nazism, fear gripped the occupied countries and all nations in Germany's shadow; but, mostly, fear gripped the Polish people, whom Hitler wanted reduced to slavery, and the Jewish people, singularly destined for isolation, humiliation and total extermination. Had these last two communities acted logically, they might have understood that they faced a common enemy and worked to combine their strengths to help each other. Unfortunately, that was not to be. Gross describes how Warsaw's onlookers watched young Jewish fighters throw themselves from burning windows during the pathetic yet glorious ghetto uprising in 1943, then applauded when German soldiers set upon them below.

But in this strongly sourced work, another fear emerges. It is that felt by Jews, not during Poland's occupation by the Nazis, but afterward, even as the country was being liberated by the Red Army.

Based on official documents as well as numerous testimonies, *Fear* recounts events as they unfolded in 1945-46. The most heinous and outrageous cruelties, it appears, were inflicted by civilians, soldiers and policemen on a benighted population of Jewish survivors from hells near and far, who were returning sick, poor,

wounded — orphans beyond hope.

To put it clearly: Like many of us, they had thought all too naively that anti-Semitism, discredited 6 million times over, had died at Auschwitz with its victims. They were wrong. Only the dead perished at Birkenau; anti-Semitism itself survived in most places, and mostly in Poland. This is, in sum, what Jan Gross reveals in a style that is at once sober and overwhelming in its very bluntness. There were man-hunts, public humiliations, insane acts of brutality. The rare escapees who thought themselves fortunate to return home found their property occupied by strangers who chased them away with scornful cries: "What, you're still in this world?" Eventually, they were made to regret their very survival. Trapping a Jew was reason enough to beat him senseless. Discover another, and pelt him with stones.

This anti-Semitic blight, all too insidious and thorough, infected every level of the population. There were those who killed Jews in order to steal from them; others who coveted their stores and homes; others, to avenge the Jews' mythical power in communist secret circles; and then there were those who killed for the simple pleasure of it.

There was the official version: Authorities minimized the tragedy's Jewishness. Even as they commemorated the dead, they forgot to mention that they were Jews. And the public version: Jews were barred from civic life — from schools as well as public office. Traditional anti-Semitism, too, lived on,

fueled by ancient religious prejudices as well as individual and collective hatreds.

Then there were the pogroms. First in tiny villages, followed by those in the big cities. Gross's reader is suddenly thrust into the Middle Ages. In Krakow and in *Kielce*, those thirsting for Jewish blood didn't hesitate to maim or murder. In these two towns, it began with that old canard claiming that Jews slaughtered Christian children to use their blood for the ritual preparation of Passover *matzos*. In *Kielce*, it was rumored, Jews had lured a Polish boy into a cave so that they could murder him. Little did it matter that there was no cave in the local Jewish Committee's building at 7 *Planty Street*. Little did it matter that, for centuries, the highest authorities of the Catholic Church had repudiated and condemned these accusations as stupid and malicious lies. The Polish population clung to such myths to feed their hatred and rage against the Jews, who were guilty of nothing more than having survived Treblinka and Auschwitz. And more: The Polish clergy in towns and provinces, almost to the last man, chose to guard its silence.

As he has done for *Jedwabne* in *Neighbors*, Gross here shows the horror of *Kielce* in all its aspects. Hatred for Jews seemed to render the whole world blind. Old and young, men and women, soldiers and police — even Boy Scouts — took part in the lynchings. And spectators either applauded or did not care. How to explain so much hate, at so many levels? It is a question for the intellectuals as well

as the politicians; neither could have predicted it. Gross quotes Tacitus, who once said, "It is indeed human nature to hate the man whom you have injured." Taking it one step further, the author posits that Polish antisemites detested their Jewish victims for their suffering, which caused such shame: "Jews were so frightening and dangerous, in other words, not because of what they had done or could do to the Poles, but because of what Poles had done to the Jews."

Does it follow that all of Poland was to blame? I do not believe in collective guilt. Only the guilty are guilty; their contemporaries are not. The children of killers are not killers but children. Today, a new generation will assume responsibility for its history. And yet there is this: The past lives on in the present, impossible to forget. Jan Gross forces Poland to confront that past. Just as he forces his readers.

One of his saddest revelations? During the war, here and there, there were Polish citizens with generous and brave hearts who, risking life and liberty, hid and protected Jews. But rather than be proud of such acts, they preferred not to talk about them.

They were afraid of the anger and the recriminations from their neighbors.

Elie Wiesel won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986. He is the author of more than 40 books, including "Night" and, most recently, "The Time of the Uprooted." This review was written in French and translated by Marie Arana.

First published in the Washington Post.

THREE DAYS TO COMMEMORATE THE HOLOCAUST?

(Continued from page 11)

honor the memory of Holocaust victims and develop educational programs as part of the resolve to help prevent future acts of genocide.

The UN Resolution makes no mention of the torture, pain or suffering of the Jewish people as a result of the world standing idly by, but it does emphasize that it wishes to honor "the courage and dedication shown by the soldiers who liberated the concentration camps."

The last clause is no doubt directly linked to the deliberate choice of the date, January 27, for the commemoration. For on January 27, Soviet troops liberated Auschwitz, the greatest of the extermination camps in which one million four hundred thousand Jews perished.

It would appear that the nations of the world were more anxious to demonstrate to future generations the readiness, courage and dedication of their soldiers in liberating the camps than in portraying what actually transpired within the camps.

The Jewish date for *Yom Hashoah* has a very different slant to it.

It is generally assumed that the April date for *Yom Hashoah*, as set by the *Knesset*, marks the beginning of the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt. This is an incorrect assumption. The revolt actually started on January 18, 1943.

Gerald Reitlinger describes the following situation within the Ghetto: On that day "a miserable column of deportees started to march down *Niska Street*, but at the junction of *Zamenhova Street* several of them pulled out firearms and shot at the SS and militia.... For three days, a house-to-house round-up was conducted. In the northeast corner of the Ghetto four of the fifty Jewish combat groups barricaded themselves and after four days (German commander) von Sammern had to use two field guns to pound up the buildings."

Von Sammern decided to call off the action that took the lives of 20 German soldiers and wounded 50.

The full-scale revolt exploded on erev

Pesach, April 19, 1943. While one of the favorite tactics of the Germans was to exploit Jewish festivals for their murderous actions (in the ghetto of *Minsk*, for example, they drowned 5,000 children in a big pit of lime on *Purim*), the real cause of the Warsaw Revolt was not of German choice. It was the Jewish remnant that reacted in the spirit of *Pesach*.

German attacks were unrelenting. But *Pesach* came to remind us of our age-old aspirations for freedom. Religious, irreligious and anti-religious, all sensed the call originating in ancient Egypt and knew that this was the moment of destiny, of standing up to evil and madly resisting.

The Warsaw Revolt inextricably links the Pharaoh of Egypt with the Pharaoh of the 20th century. It is one story that spans ages and brings to life fables and stories of old. One of the monumental glories of the Revolt is that it shows how our age-old tradition renews itself in our actions today. There would not have been a Revolt without *Pesach*, which spurred the desperate remnant to heroic action.

Justice demands that our *Yom Hashoah* remain where it is, as close to *Pesach* as possible, to remind future generations of the living, dynamic impact of our past on our national future. The day of *Kaddish* is also in its right position, allowing individuals to intimately unite with the memory of their particular beloved.

It is to be hoped that the UN's International Holocaust Memorial Day will be utilized by the nations to learn the lessons that will prevent future occurrences of the evil that led to the murder of six million human beings only because they were Jews, with the world standing idly by.

Dr. Ervin Birnbaum is founder and director of Shearim Netanya, the first outreach program to Russian immigrants in Israel. He has taught at City University of New York, Haifa University and the University of Moscow; served as national superintendent of education of Youth Aliyah and as the first national superintendent of education for the Institute of Jewish Studies.

HIDDEN STORY OF BAD AROLSEN

(Continued from page 6)

Of the 589 local men who ended up in *Neuengamme*, only 49 came back.

"We hoped perhaps some personal effects would be" at the archive, said Decker, 48, who lost two great-uncles in the raid.

Almost everyone in *Putten* lost someone, he said. "It is an everyday topic. And there are still 10 or 12 widows and two or three survivors living there."

The Dutch visitors searched the archive for information.

"We found the personal effects of five men," Decker said. "Four had died in the concentration camp and one is still alive."

After the visitors returned home, archive staff continued searching.

"We hoped for one person, and we found 22," Decker said.

One of the first five packages was given to Nicole Dashorst, whose great-uncle, Leon Roos, was among the few Jewish deportees from *Putten*. Roos ultimately was among the nearly 8,000 prisoners killed in the British bombing of the German ship *Cap Arcona* days before the armistice.

Dashorst, 39, of *Nieu-Vennep*, recognized a family photo on the *October44* Web site. She contacted the foundation

and eventually "somebody phoned me that pictures and other personal items belonging to him were found."

In October she received the small envelope during the annual memorial ceremony in *Putten*. Inside was a wallet still bearing traces of paint; her great-uncle worked as a painter before being deported.

"There was a personal ID card with a picture and his fingerprint, and it is written where his scars were. It is very beautiful," Dashorst said. "And there are four or five pictures with my grandma" — the only family member to survive.

The one survivor to receive his own personal property, Jacob van Wincoop, 81, got back his ID card and wallet, and a note confirming that he needed his horse and wagon to deliver milk. It was signed by his father, who also was deported but never returned.

"It was not a lot that he got back, but he took it in his hands and didn't let go," Decker said.

Like Decker, Most descendants of the *Putten* deportees will never receive a thing.

The remaining envelopes will wait until another letter arrives, another inquiry, another request for one last sign of someone who never came home from *Neuengamme*.

CONDUCTOR REVIVES MUSIC OF HOLOCAUST

(Continued from page 11)

She is repulsed by his looks and cruelly forces him to look into a mirror for the first time. Horrified at his reflection, he dies.



Composer Alexander Zemlinsky.

She momentarily regrets the loss of her "toy," but returns to her birthday party dance.

"I think of *'The Dwarf'* as one of the great operas of the 20th century and Zemlinsky as one of its great composers," Conlon said.

Zemlinsky, once a prominent member of Gustav Mahler's circle, is said to have fashioned the 1921 work because of his own short stature and homely looks.

By contrast, the Ullmann piece is a light satire written by the Czech composer two years before he was sent to the *Terezin* "showplace" concentration camp where the Nazis used artists as proof that the Jews were being treated well. He was later shipped to Auschwitz.

Paradoxically, Conlon noted, the 20 works Ullmann wrote in the camps were saved while many of his pre-war compositions are lost.

Conlon, 57, said he was drawn to the project by happenstance. A student of classical music since age 11, he was driv-

ing home one night when he heard an unfamiliar, yet magical, piece of music on the car radio. It was Zemlinsky.

"One thing led to another. I was working in Germany at the time and recording with EMI and we decided to record almost everything Zemlinsky wrote," Conlon recalled.

Soon, he was recording other composers of the era, men like Ullmann, Walter Braunfels, Franz Schreker, Ernst Krenek and Erich Korngold, who spent the war years writing Hollywood movie music. Krenek also thrived in exile, but many fell into obscurity, like Braunfels.

Next year's "Recovered Voices" pro-



Composer Viktor Ullmann.

gram will include operas by Braunfels and Schreker, who succumbed to a stroke in 1934. Both may have escaped the Holocaust, but anti-semitism cut short their careers.

The Nazis destroyed so many voices that "there was no one left in Germany who knew their work," Conlon said, adding that thanks to small car radio, he had gained "a mission."

"DEADLY MEDICINE" OF HOLOCAUST

(Continued from page 6)

else, he passed away of tuberculosis, but I heard, but between the lines, I hear that this was a fantasy of the person who brought me the news, that he was taken to the gas chambers, the last day," she says. Margot survived the camps, but would never be able to fulfill her dream of having children. Bachrach understands what was done.

"One of the methods that was researched was injecting cold carbon dioxide into the uterus and thereby scaring, you know, creating scars on the fallopian tubes, instead of cutting them," says Bachrach.

Margot remembers, "They inserted that with a big, not syringe with a needle, but a pressure syringe into the vaginal area and took an X-ray."

Perhaps the most startling information in the exhibit is the American involvement in the so-called "Eugenics" movement. It involved a misreading of Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory.

Bachrach frowns. "Eugenics, the word itself means 'well born,' had a lot of popular support in many western countries in the early 20th century, including the United States, including the state of Minnesota."

In fact, 19,000 patients in Minnesota and other states' mental facilities were

sterilized in the 1920's and 30's. This was done with approval by the State legislatures. The U.S. Supreme Court even joined the Eugenics cause. The highest court in the land ruled in favor of the sterilization in 1927.

One prominent Minnesota physician, Dr. Charles Dight, penned letters of praise to Adolph Hitler. Dight wanted to extend sterilization to individuals deemed inferior outside the institutions, in the general population.

The Nazis were not restrained by the American democratic system, as was Dight and his ilk. Hitler's dictatorship used Eugenics as a warped, pseudoscientific justification for sterilizing and killing millions of Jews, Gypsies, gays and others. The reality of their intentions is chilling. Margot repeats it in the matter-of-fact tone of someone who has spent six-plus decades telling the story. "(It was) to get rid of large amounts of unwanted people in the easiest possible way," says Margot. She married again, twice, after the war, finally settling in Minnesota with the late Rudy DeWilde, her third husband, but, of course, she never had children of her own.

In the new millennium, Margot speaks to thousands of school children each year in Minnesota, explaining her first-person experience as one of the ultimate examples of "Man's inhumanity to man."

WOMEN OF VALOR

HONOREE ROCHELLE CHERRY

Rochelle Silberzweig Cherry and her family have always been committed to Jewish cultural preservation and Holocaust remembrance. She is the oldest of three children of Szulem (Sol) and Gloria Rosen Silberzweig. Both of her parents fought in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and survived numerous labor and concentration camps.



for Yad Vashem. The Cherrys are deeply committed to teaching the lessons of the Holocaust and Robert recent co-edited *Rethinking Poles and Jews: Troubled Past, Brighter Future*.

She and her husband, Robert, are founders of the Brooklyn *Kindershule* – an after-school program for children 9-13 years old that instills

Rochelle was born in Germany and came with her parents to the United States in 1949. The Holocaust was always a part of their lives. Her parents were active in the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization (WAGRO). After her mother's death in 1979, Rochelle's father became active with the American Society for Yad Vashem and eventually became a Benefactor. He underwrote the Auschwitz-Birkenau model displayed in the Museum at Yad Vashem, as well as other projects. In 2004, her father completed his memoir, *"Mama, It will be Alright,"* which was published after his death that year by Yad Vashem.

Following in the footsteps of her father, Rochelle and her husband Robert became Trustees of the 21st Century Endowment Fund of the American Society

in them an appreciation for the Eastern European *Yiddish* culture and the experience of Jewish immigrants. They are also active members of the Brooklyn College *Hillel*. In addition, Rochelle served as the Co-Chair for the 2007 Annual Dinner Journal, which received many accolades.

Rochelle is proud to accept this award in memory of her late parents, Gloria and Sol Silberzweig. She has always been proud to be their daughter and is committed to continuing their legacy, so that the lessons of the Holocaust will not be forgotten and can lead to a more tolerant world.

Rochelle is a professor of Audiology at Brooklyn College. She has been married to Robert for 40 years and is the proud mother of Sara and Joshua, and grandmother to Jacob and Gita.

HONOREE JEAN GLUCK

Jean Gluck was born in *Slotvina*, Czechoslovakia to proud parents Rochel and Mordechai Gedalovits. In April, 1944 the Germans occupied *Slotvina* and all the Jews were rounded up and forced into the Jewish area, which became the sealed, guarded ghetto. Fortunately, the family's house was incorporated into the ghetto, where they shared their home with other people who had been displaced.



Eugen, she is a Founding member of the Young Israel of Forest Hills, and dedicated the new building of the Rabbinical Seminary of America.

The Glucks are Century Builders of Yeshiva University Holocaust Studies Chair. Their philanthropic work in the US includes the United Jewish Appeal, Israel Bonds, *Keren Kayement L'Yisrael* – The Jewish National Fund, and many other organizations that support Israel.

From *Slotvina*, Jean and her parents were deported to Auschwitz, where her parents were sent directly to the crematorium. She was put to work for four months and from there was sent to work in a munitions factory in *Freudenthal*, Germany where she was liberated by the Russians in May, 1945.

Jean and her husband Eugen are founding members of the American Society for Yad Vashem and Benefactors of the historic first Project, "The Valley of the Communities" built at Yad Vashem.

The Glucks have been participants and supporters of the American Society and from our inception, Jean continues to be deeply involved in the Society's activities. Her husband, Eugen, is Vice Chairman of the American Society for Yad Vashem.

Jean's work for the Bikur Cholim organization in Queens helped make the organization what it is today. With her husband

Jean and Eugen are founders of the Great Synagogue of Jerusalem, and received numerous awards and accolades in Israel. Through their vision and generosity, *Bet-El* has become the thriving center of learning it is today. Jean and Eugen are Benefactors of *Shaare Zedek* Hospital, Jerusalem, and have recently dedicated The Jean and Eugen Gluck Department of General Pediatrics.

The Glucks are also Benefactors of the recently completed Menachem Begin Heritage Center in Jerusalem.

Jean is deeply committed to the memory of and the lessons of the Holocaust, and the American Society recognizes her Lifetime contribution to the Cause of Remembrance.

Jean and Eugen are proud of their children – Sidney and Cheryl Gluck; Rose and Dr. Mark Friedman; and Barbara and Alan Weichselbaum and their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

LUNCHEON CO-CHAIR RITA LEVY

Deeply committed to Israel, Holocaust remembrance, and Jewish cultural preservation, Rita Levy and her family have been active in San Francisco, New York, Washington DC and Yad Vashem Jerusalem. They were founding members of the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, and the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City.



and the American Gathering of Holocaust Survivors. Rita and her mother were founding members of the International Women's Division of YIVO. Rita was a founding member of the San Francisco Jewish Community Federation Working Women's Forum and served on the Strategic Planning Committee of the Brandeis-Hillel Day School.

Committed to continuing Holocaust Remembrance through the legacy of her parents, Rita was honored by the American Society for Yad Vashem at the Annual Luncheon in 2007 when she was presented with the award for Remembering the Past, Ensuring the Future. She has also served as the Co-Chair for the 2007 Annual Dinner Journal which received many accolades.

Her father was a Member of the Board of the American Society of Yad Vashem

Rita's husband, David, is currently Vice President of the Board of the Sid Jacobson Jewish Community Center. The Levy's are active supporters of Hadassah, UJA, their synagogue, Temple Beth Sholom of Roslyn, and of course, Yad Vashem.

Rita has an MBA from Columbia University. She and her husband work together in the family's real estate business. Rita and David are the proud parents of two children, Rebecca and Matthew.

LUNCHEON CO-CHAIR MINDY SCHALL

A member of the third generation, Mindy Schall is the daughter of Sharon and David Halpern and her grandparents, Sam and Gladys Halpern, are Founders of and active leaders in the American Society for Yad Vashem since its inception.



700 participants per year.

She is involved with numerous charity organizations, including: *Chabad's Children of Chernobyl*, Israel Bonds, Israel Defense Forces, The Jewish National Fund, and United Jewish Appeal. Mindy inherited a strong sense of Jewish values from her parents and grandparents, and is deeply committed to many philanthropic causes.

Mindy lives in Livingston, NJ with her husband, Alan, and her two daughters, Emily and Sophia. She has been a member of the board of the American Society for Yad Vashem's Young Leadership Associates for the past few years. Serving as co-chair for the Young Leadership Associates Winter Gala for the past two years, Mindy has helped to make this a successful event, with over

Mindy has dedicated her life to raising her family and helping others. She has a strong personal connection to the Holocaust and through her grandparents' eyes, she has witnessed the horrors they endured and wishes to do all that she can to assure such a tragedy never occurs again.

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